MAKING CHINESE CHORAL MUSIC ACCESSIBLE IN THE UNITED STATES: A STANDARDIZED IPA GUIDE FOR CHINESE-LANGUAGE WORKS

by

Hana J. Cai

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Doctoral Committee

_____
Carolann Buff, Research Director

_____
Dominick DiOrio, Chair

_____
Gary Arvin

_____
Betsy Burleigh

September 8, 2020

For my parents, who instilled in me a love for music and academia.

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Making Chinese Choral Music Accessible in the United States: A Standardized IPA Guide for Chinese-Language Works

Chinese choirs and conductors are gaining an increasing presence at American choral conferences. Yet as much as Chinese choral conductors advocate for performing Chinese pieces, it is nearly impossible to find easy ways to prepare and perform Chinese choral works in the United States. Through interviews with conductors and composers of Chinese choral music, I researched the process of acquiring these pieces remotely, the trends in Chinese choral music, and the potential market for these works. This study examines why the accessibility of Chinese choral music in America is hindered by issues of discoverability, copyright and publication, and language. Although simple solutions do not exist for the first two issues, I have addressed language by advocating for the use of *Pinyin* in all Chinese choral publications in the US and by establishing and creating a Mandarin Chinese diction guide for choral conductors. This diction guide includes a chart that equates every sound of *Pinyin* with an IPA symbol and describes how to teach each sound to non-Chinese speakers.

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Part I: The Accessibility of Chinese Choral Music

In recent seasons, the world of classical music has been under scrutiny for failing to keep up with the changing times. The repertoire of major orchestras is often the primary target of this criticism: season after season, the majority of programmed works are most often by white, male, and usually deceased composers.[1] The choral world is trying to move away from this trend. Works by living composers, or at least works composed in the last fifty years, makes up the bulk of the repertoire performed by high level choruses at choral conferences like the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO), if not regularly in choral programs across the country.[2]

The effort to diversify choral programs comes with a whole host of issues. First is the issue of cultural appropriation, a pit into which many choral conductors and arrangers have fallen. Choral works in the category of "world music" are often the biggest offenders of cultural appropriation. Conductors then use these works to diversify an otherwise Western (read "white") program. Second, the pieces within the genre of "world music" are frequently inauthentic arrangements or reproductions. The danger of arrangements by composers who are not knowledgeable about the country, culture, or tradition from which the original song comes is that their arrangements send a false narrative about the cultural context of a song. A third problem is the issue of language, particularly languages that are not based on Roman script. One who is not well-versed in the language in which they compose can run into issues of accurately representing the language for English-speaking choirs. I genuinely believe that most choral conductors, at least of my generation, are aware of these issues of cultural appropriation and strive to do better and more diverse programming, but many do not know how to do this type of programming because of their inability to assess or access world music from authentic sources.

[1] "Orchestra Season Data." Institute for Composer Diversity, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.composerdiversity.com/orchestra-seasons.

[2] See for example the programs for the annual meetings of The National Collegiate Choral Organization, 2017 (NCCO7), and for the ACDA National Conference 2019.

Chinese choral music is one example that breaks the mold of authentic world music and is gaining an increasing presence in the United States. Unfortunately, much of this repertoire still remains inaccessible to most American choral conductors. At the most recent regional ACDA conference in Chicago (2018) and national conference in Kansas City (2019), Chinese choirs have been in attendance and several have been headliners for many of the concerts.[3] As part of their performances, it was common for the conductors of these choirs to give a presentation about the history of Chinese choral music, or a brief explanation and demonstration of how to pronounce *Pinyin*.[4] The reason for these additional presentations was to advocate for the performance of Chinese choral music in the United States. These concerts featured a combination of pieces from the Western canon and contemporary Chinese choral works, all to much acclaim.

Considering how much attention is being paid to Chinese choral music at these conferences, it is curious that more of these Chinese choral works have not made it into the performing repertory of American choirs. I believe that this absence is due in large part to the inability to locate scores and recordings of these works, publication and copyright issues in both in China and in the United States, and the issue of a non-unified transliteration and a lack of resources on the pronunciation of *Pinyin*.

The goal of this document is to discuss the limited access to Chinese choral music in the United States with regards to discoverability, copyright and publication, and language. Although simple solutions do not exist for the issues of discoverability and Chinese copyright law, I will address the issue of language by advocating for a standardized system of romanization and by establishing and creating a Mandarin Chinese diction guide for choral conductors. Additionally, I will explore some of the current repertoire trends in choral music in China through interviews with conductors and composers/arrangers of

[3] "2018 Conference Repertoire – Invited Choirs," North Central Division American Choral Directors Association, accessed April 25, 2019, http://www.ncacda.org/2018-conference-repertoire-invited-choirs/.
"Event Details," American Choral Directors Association, accessed April 25, 2019, https://acda.org/NationalConference/Event_Details/NationalConference/Event_Details.aspx?hkey=7b48b11d-ea23-43fc-ad7a-1838425e2557.

[4] *Pinyin* is the romanization of Standard Chinese, or Mandarin Chinese. I will discuss the structure and pronunciation of *Pinyin* later in this document.

Chinese choral music. I will also compare different International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) guides available for conductors and singers learning Mandarin Chinese diction. With the rising popularity of Chinese choirs and the increasing awareness for authentic and culturally sensitive interpretations of world music in the United States comes the need to address some of these issues of accessibility to Chinese choral music.

For the purposes of this document, "Chinese choral music" will refer to music that fulfills the following requirements: 1) the text is in Chinese, either in Mandarin or a dialect and 2) is intentionally composed in a Chinese harmonic idiom (based in the pentatonic scale or Chinese folk melodies). The music does not have to be exclusively published or accessible in mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong, nor does it have to be by composers of Chinese descent. Similarly, if a piece is in a Chinese harmonic idiom, by a Chinese composer, but is in English or a Romance language, it is not included in this document's definition of "Chinese choral music." Such works include Tan Dun's *Water Passion* and Zhou Long's *Words of the Sun*, both of which use texts in English. Works by composers of Chinese descent that are not intentionally written in a Chinese harmonic idiom, like the works of Melissa Dunphy, will also not be included in this definition of "Chinese choral music."

Issues of Accessibility

As much as Chinese choral conductors advocate for performing Chinese pieces in the United States, it is nearly impossible to find easy ways to prepare and perform them outside of the context of a Chinese-language choir. Many pieces are not published in the United States due in large part to the difference in copyright laws between China and the United States. Often the titles of the works are in Chinese characters or in *Pinyin* and loosely translated in programs for an English-speaking audience, so they are virtually unsearchable on the internet by a non-Chinese speaker. Even if one were able to obtain a score of one of these pieces, the scores are written in Chinese characters, which are nearly impossible to look up without knowledge of the language and how to use a Chinese dictionary.

There are a limited number of Chinese-language pieces that are currently available for purchase in the United States. Some are by Chinese composers living in the United States, but most are often folksong arrangements by non-Chinese composers. These composers may or may not have extended connections or education in Chinese languages or Chinese music. The works, intended for English-speaking choirs, have no unified transliteration and often include inaccurate pronunciation guides of the Chinese texts. These language barriers make these pieces seem unnecessarily difficult and unapproachable. With a current climate of increased sensitivity to cultural differences, many choral conductors steer clear of them to avoid offending any potential Chinese speakers in the audience.

Options for Chinese Choral Music in the United States

A quick Google search of the phrase "Chinese choral music" will yield a plethora of works that are potentially accessible to American conductors. One of the more comprehensive lists is on the website Singers.com, that (they claim) lists *a cappella* choral works that are folk song arrangements by country, including China.[5] A search for the terms "world music" or equivalent categories on choral music publishing websites (J.W. Pepper, Santa Barbara, Walton, Hal Leonard, earthsongs, etc.) reveals even more options. These works, all classified as "Chinese choral music," fall into three general categories: folk song arrangements, original music by Chinese composers, and collections of Chinese songs.

The folk song arrangements are by both Chinese and non-Chinese composers. The non-Chinese composers may or may not have a background in Chinese language or culture. An example of a non-Chinese composer arrangement of a folk song is *Mo Li Hua* arranged by Bob Chilcott for SATB choir and piano accompaniment. Chilcott is a well-known British composer and arranger, but he does not specialize in Chinese music and it is unknown if he is familiar with Chinese languages or has any sort of personal connection to the original folk song. An example of an arrangement by a non-Chinese composer with specific interests in Chinese music is *Boat on Tai Lake* by Reed Criddle for SATB choir, piano, and

[5] "Choral Arrangements from China," Singers.com, accessed February 24, 2019, https://www.singers.com/sheet-music/china.

cello. Criddle is a composer/conductor at Utah Valley University who, in addition to a doctorate in conducting, holds an undergraduate degree in both vocal performance and Chinese, a Master of Arts in East Asian Studies, and was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Taiwan, 2017–2018, in order to prepare performing editions of Taiwanese Buddhist chant.[6] Chen Yi's *Three Sets of Chinese Folk Songs* is an example of an arrangement of Chinese folk songs by a Chinese composer. Chen is a Chinese composer who currently resides in the United States. She is a Distinguished Professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory and a Pulitzer Prize finalist. She holds degrees from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and a doctorate from Columbia University and has been awarded fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Currently, most original music by Chinese composers that is available in the US is limited to Chinese composers currently residing in the US. The best-known pieces of this type are those by Chen Yi (mentioned above), Zhou Long, and Tan Dun, who are emigrants from China and all have at least some education in composition at an American academic institution. Some examples of pieces include *Spring Rain* by Chen, and Tan's *Buddha Passion.*

There are two notable collections of Chinese choral music (that is, many choral pieces by different composers bound together in a single book) available in the US. The first one is called *Half Moon Rising*, collected and edited by John Winzenburg, an associate professor of music at Hong Kong Baptist University and a promoter of Chinese choral music.[7] The second is called *Tang Poetry for Choirs*, edited by Richard Tsang, the Founding Chairman of the Hong Kong Composers' Guild and the former president of the International Society for Contemporary Music.[8] This collection is available in two volumes and includes choral settings of Tang Dynasty poems intended for use by primary and

[6] "Professional Pages: Reed Criddle," Utah Valley University, accessed April 23, 2019, https://www.uvu.edu/profpages/profiles/show/user_id/8566.

[7] *Half Moon Rising: Choral Music from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan*, ed. John Winzenburg (London: Peters Edition, 2015), ii.

[8] *Tang Poetry for Choirs: A collection of original choral compositions by Hong Kong composers based on Tang-Dynasty poetry, Volume II: for mixed and male voices*, ed. Richard Tsang (Hong Kong: InTuition Creative Learning, 2017).

secondary school students. The pieces are by Hong Kong-based composers and are primarily for use in Chinese choirs, but English translations are included for non-Chinese speakers.

Most of these works I have mentioned above, particularly the octavo scores, are geared towards high school choruses, but this may have greater implications. It appears that there is a lacuna in the repertory of works geared towards college, semi-professional, and professional choral ensembles. Works of these kind exist, but they are currently not available for purchase in the US. Take for example, the Chinese songs on the Shenzhen Golden Bell Youth Choir's concert program at the ACDA North Central Division Conference. On the program were *A Glance of Five Finger's Mountain*, *Spring Night*, *Light Rain*, *Spring*, *Fascinated Sky Mountain*, and *Jiang-xi Chant of the Field*. A search of these songs on YouTube and Google yielded no results that had to do with music, with the exception of the aforementioned ACDA program.

The Challenges of Searching For and Finding Chinese Choral Music

There are several different kinds of sources available in the US that provide information about Chinese choral works that might be accessible to American choirs. These resources include programs by Chinese choirs from ACDA conferences, which often include the titles of Chinese choral works in Chinese characters, *Pinyin*, English translations, or any combination thereof. Choirs and conductors in the US also learn about Chinese choral works through lectures and presentations by other conductors, especially those with choirs that travel from China to participate in American conferences and workshops. At the ACDA Western Division Conference in 2014, Dr. Tian XiaoBao, the director and professor of Choral Studies at the School of Music in Central China Normal University, gave a presentation on the history of Chinese choral music in the 20th century.[9] In the presentation, Tian listed choral pieces that denote important markers in the history of Chinese choral music (such as the first Chinese choral piece to use western compositional techniques, the first Chinese symphonic choral work, etc.). The names of

[9] Tian XiaoBao, "Chinese Choral Music," Western American Choral Directors Association, accessed November 17, 2018, http://acdawestern.org/conference/xiaobaosession.pdf.

these pieces were listed in *Pinyin* with loose English translations and included the names of the composers in *Pinyin*. Some of the pieces only had the English translation and no *Pinyin*.

Armed with only this limited information from the 2014 ACDA conference, I attempted to track down scores and recordings of some of these works. First, as a native English speaker, even with substantial knowledge of Mandarin and written Chinese, I found it extremely difficult to find video or audio recordings of any of these works. It would be virtually impossible to find the pieces without any prior knowledge of Chinese at all. There are some videos of Chinese choirs performing Chinese music on YouTube, but they are usually of low visual and audio quality.[10] Second, there is the issue of Chinese social media that use different platforms than the ones used in the US. The Chinese government has banned the use of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube and made them inaccessible in China.[11] Instead, Chinese social media platforms include:[12]

1) WeChat, a platform that combines instant messenger, email, and payment applications such as Venmo and PayPal.

2) Weibo, a blogging website.

3) QQ, an instant messaging application.

4) QZone, a platform for uploading photos and videos.

5) Tudou, a platform similar to YouTube.[13]

These social media platforms do have more recordings of Chinese choral music, if one knows the names of the pieces. However, if one does not even know the platforms on which to search, having the name of the work does not really help find those recordings.

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[10] For a compilation of videos of Chinese choral works on YouTube from Dr. Tian's lecture, please visit https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-NXyAwqJFF_oZEvqX6RN66UnRQ-_LY3u.

[11] Conversations with Emily Cai and Jingqi Zhu on April 3, 2019 via Facebook Messenger. It is worth noting that American social media platforms are available in Hong Kong. Although under Chinese jurisdiction, Hong Kong currently has its own governing body regarding access to social media.

[12] "Social Networks," Tencent, accessed April 3, 2019, https://www.tencent.com/en-us/system.html.

[13] As of May 2020, Tudou is less commonly used than the other social media networks listed here.

Due to language barriers, the problem of non-standardized transliteration of Chinese characters, inconsistent use of Pinyin or English-only translations, and differing social media platforms that are unavailable in both the US and China, it seems that it is essentially impossible for a conductor with no knowledge of Chinese or its social media to find recordings of Chinese pieces.

Issues of Copyright and Publication

At conferences such as the ACDA, hundreds of conductors are able to hear Chinese choral works performed by Chinese choirs. Unfortunately, even if a conductor were able to see a performance of a Chinese choral piece they wanted to perform, they are still unlikely to be able to find and purchase scores for their choirs. Even if an American conductor were able to find a published score, there are still problems with their accessibility with American choirs. Criddle, who is one of the main published arrangers of Chinese choral music in the United States, notes that some Chinese choral music is published in an idiomatic numeric notation, and not Western staff notation.[14]

Choral works by Chinese composers who reside in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong are not typically available for purchase through European and North American publishing companies. First, there are no Chinese websites for marketing choral music that are akin to the ones used in the United States (J.W. Pepper, Hal Leonard, etc.). Instead, publishing houses in China, such as the People's Music Publishing House, publish some choral music, but not enough to satiate the increasing amount of choral activity in China.[15]

Second, in China, a conductor can choose a work from choral music collections books (similar to the collections *Half Moon Rising* and *Tang Poetry for Choirs*) and simply photocopy the pieces and distribute them to their choirs.[16] Some well-known choral composers in China self-publish and distribute their music outside of these larger collections. Unfortunately, the cost to acquire the music for these self-

[14] Reed Criddle, email exchange with author, February 3, 2020.
[15] Wenhao Mu, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.
[16] Xiaosha Lin, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.

published works is expensive because the demand for Chinese choral music in China is so high. Currently, Professor and choral conductor Su Yanhui at the South China Normal University has established an online platform for choral music distribution on WeChat with her husband.[17] They are trying to act as agents for the choral composers to distribute digital versions of Chinese choral works by composers at a more reasonable price.

Choral music collections work as an economical option in China because of the culture of photocopying and loose (or non-existent) copyright laws. Unfortunately, choral collections are not a feasible financial option for the majority of American choirs due to more stringent US copyright laws. In the US, for every performance each member of a choir is required to have a purchased copy of music for a piece. Purchasing twenty to sixty copies of a choral collection is significantly more costly than purchasing the same number of octavo-style scores.[18]

Another issue of copyright laws in China as compared with the strict copyright laws in the US is another barrier for publishing Chinese choral works in the United States. Winzenburg's collection *Half Moon Rising* is one example of this copyright culture discrepancy. *Half Moon Rising* was published through Peters with the intent of disseminating Chinese choral music to an English-speaking audience.[19] According to Chinese conductor Xiaosha Lin, who assisted Winzenburg in editing *Half Moon Rising*, in order to have the collection published by a Western publishing company, Winzenburg had to reach out to all of the composers or deceased composers' families to get the permissions needed in order to publish the pieces in the collection. Because copyrights are not an issue in China, many of them did not understand what copyright laws were, and possibly the urgency behind acquiring such permissions. After understanding the issue, some composers even became more difficult because they wanted to make more money out of having the works published. When Winzenburg tried to get pieces published outside of the collection as octavos, many of the composers would not agree, several of whom did not understand what

[17] Wenhao Mu, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.

[18] *Half Moon Rising* published by Peters is over $18.00 per copy. *Tang Poetry for Choirs* is not available in the United States.

[19] Xiaosha Lin, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.

octavos were.[20] To date, Peters has still not published any of the works in *Half Moon Rising* as octavos outside of the collection. In order for them to do so, Peters and Winzenburg would again need to acquire the permission of the composers. For the moment, they have decided that the effort is just not worth it.[21]

Lin tried to perform some pieces from *Half Moon Rising* with her American choir in the US, but could not ask the choir to spend the money to purchase the entire collection.[22] Because she was in the US, copyright laws forbade (or frowned upon) her simply photocopying what she needed. When she reached out to Peters, they did not sell the octavos for the piece she wanted. When she reached out to the original composer in China, they did not care about the copyright issues that she was facing in the US because of the differences between copyright culture in China as compared to the US. When faced with this situation, a conductor has two options: 1) either perform the pieces with the Chinese composers' permission but illegally in accordance with American copyright laws or 2) do not perform the piece at all.

Due to cultural issues of how music is disseminated to choral groups and copyright issues in the US that do not exist in China, Chinese choral music for the time being is limited to publication in China and through the few choral collections that are available in the US. In order to generate interest in collections such as *Half Moon Rising* that will eventually lead to publishing octavos of individual works within the collection, perhaps American conductors (and Peters) need to create a provision that temporarily allows for the copying and distribution of these copies to choir members. If one or two pieces start to be performed regularly, then perhaps it will be worth the time and effort it would take for Peters and Winzenburg to pursue the copyright permissions for those pieces to be published as octavos. Then, as the octavos are published, scores can be legally and more economically obtained for use by their choir members.

Unfortunately, no easy solution exists for the differences in American and Chinese copyright culture. One option is to advocate for the publication of more Chinese pieces by publishers that

[20] Xiaosha Lin, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.
[21] Xiaosha Lin, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.
[22] Xiaosha Lin, Facebook Messenger Conversation with author, March 18, 2019.

disseminate choral works to an English-speaking audience. For Chinese choral music not yet available in the US in any form, there needs to be more communication between American conductors with connections to publishing firms and Chinese composers. Criddle has found a short-term solution by receiving manuscripts for choral scores directly from colleagues in China.[23] To find which composers are writing Chinese choral music or already have popular pieces, one could reach out to one or several of the many Chinese choirs in North America, ask them about their favorite pieces or their favorite Chinese composers, and if they have contact information for them. If American conductors were willing to become liaisons between Chinese composers and publishers, more of their music could be made available in the US. The responsibility for promoting Chinese music would then not fall on a single person or publisher's shoulders.

Marketing for Chinese Choral Works

Currently, the compositional trends in Chinese choral music include pop song arrangements, which tend to attract younger singers as in the United States,[24] choral arrangements of Chinese minority group folk songs,[25] and original tonal and atonal pieces that imitate the style of Western composers.[26] Criddle states that the primary market for his choral works in the US is the population of school choirs and community choirs, and occasionally, church choirs and choral directors who are planning choir tours to Asia. Choirs in the United States whose primary membership has Chinese/Taiwanese identities also perform a significant amount of Chinese choral music.[27] However, according to Yufen Yen, conductor of the Cambridge Chinese Choral Society, because the repertory of Chinese pieces is not published in the

[23] Criddle, email exchange with author, February 3, 2020.

[24] Both Criddle and Shuyu Lin spoke about the popularity of pop song arrangements in China (Criddle, 2020; Shuyu Lin, 2020).

[25] Criddle, email exchange with author, February 3, 2020.

[26] Yi-de Chen, email exchange with author, January 27, 2020. Both Yi-de Chen and Shuyu Lin spoke about composed Chinese choral works in the style of Western composers (Chen, 2020, Shuyu Lin 2020).

[27] Criddle, email exchange with author, February 3, 2020.

US, Chinese and Taiwanese conductors simply bring pieces over from China and photocopy the pieces for their choirs.[28]

Based on conversations I had while preparing this document, it is clear that Chinese and Taiwanese choral ensembles in the US and North America are not the target market for Chinese works published in the US. The intended market for Chinese choral works would therefore be American choirs not focused on the Chinese language, especially collegiate-level choirs. Right now, much of the Chinese-language repertoire available in the US is aimed at high school and community choruses. Typically, the pieces are fairly simple arrangements with intuitive harmonies and often end up as the token non-Western European repertoire on a program. More difficult pieces by Chinese composers exist, but they are just not readily available in the US. Ironically, these pieces would be good options for more advanced choirs looking to diversify their repertoire. Both Yen and composer Shuyu Lin point to Jin Chenzhi (金承志, b. 1987) as a Chinese contemporary composer who is writing more difficult choral works.[29] Unfortunately, Yen states that it is nearly impossible to get copies of his works outside of China, except through Pana Musica in Taiwan.[30]

For now, Criddle believes that the best way to distribute unpublished Chinese choral works to American choirs is by making photocopies, ideally with the composer's permission. His colleagues in China recommend this method of distribution because this practice is the norm in China.[31] Conversely, Yen notes that three years ago, the Cambridge Chinese Choral Society made the switch to performing only pieces that choir members could purchase.[32] In accordance with American copyright laws and to be able to legally post videos on YouTube, they no longer perform pieces that are not available for purchase.

[28] Yufen Yen, email exchange with author, March 5, 2020.

[29] Both Yen and Shuyu Lin cite Jin as a popular contemporary Chinese composer (Yen, 2020; Lin, 2020.)

[30] Yen, email exchange with author, March 5, 2020.

[31] Criddle, email exchange with author, February 3, 2020.

[32] It is MIT's practice for each member of the choir to purchase their own scores.

Until more American publishing companies publish Chinese choral music and if YouTube videos are not a concern for a conductor, Criddle's suggested practice might unfortunately be the only viable option.

Language Barriers

One major reason that Chinese choral music is not often performed in the US is due to the difficulty and lack of experience with the language. This is understandable. Across the US, student enrollment in Chinese classes is increasing, but that is not necessarily the case for music majors. Typical curricula for music degrees require students to focus on European languages such as German, French, or Italian, if they are even required to take a language at all.[33] [34] In some ways, Chinese is grammatically easier than English as it has neither verb conjugations nor determiners. However, the primary difficulty for non-native Chinese speakers and singers is that Chinese shares few consonant and vowel sounds with English. A further complication is that there is a lack of a comprehensive diction guide for Mandarin Chinese for singers and choral groups. This problem is further amplified because there appear to be no unified transliteration across Chinese choral works that are available in the US.

Fortunately, there is a simple solution to solving the issue of language. First, instead of a translation, all publishers of Chinese choral music in the US should use *Pinyin*, the standard romanization for Mandarin Chinese used both in China and internationally.[35] *Pinyin* is admittedly not very intuitive, but *Pinyin* is consistent in its pronunciation. The use and pronunciation of *Pinyin* should be treated like the pronunciation of German, French, or Italian: the sounds in these languages are also not always similar to those in English, but singers learn how to pronounce the sounds anyway. Using *Pinyin* would standardize the way that the Chinese language is represented in choral music in the US, which would

[33] "400,000 American students learning Mandarin," China Global Television Network, accessed April 3, 2019, https://news.cgtn.com/news/7963444f31557a6333566d54/share_p.html.

[34] David Goldberg et al. "Enrollments in Languages Other Than English in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2013," Modern Language Association (2015), https://apps.mla.org/pdf/2013_enrollment_survey.pdf.

[35] Margalit Fox, "Zhou Youguang, Who Made Writing Chinese as Simple as ABC, Dies at 111," *New York Times* (New York, NY), January 14, 2017.

mean that singers and conductors would not have to navigate a new system of pronunciation for every piece of Chinese choral music. Second, singers and choral conductors need a comprehensive diction guide for how to teach and sing in Mandarin Chinese.

The second section of this document includes such a diction guide using an intermediary *Pinyin* romanization. Often, quick guides to Mandarin pronunciation can be found in the introductory pages of publications of Chinese choral works. They are usually written by a non-native speaker of Chinese or a non-Chinese speaker, sometimes with the assistance of a native speaker. All of them equate the sounds of Mandarin Chinese to those in English and very few of them use the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

There are several books in Chinese linguistics that describe in great detail the sounds of Mandarin Chinese, and there is an IPA system that corresponds almost directly with the letters of *Pinyin*. Of course, these books do not detail issues specific to singing, such as which vowel should be sustained on a long note or how to sing a retroflex vowel, but neither do the quick guides of the octavo scores I mention above. The Chinese diction guide for singers in Section II includes the IPA, describes in detail the action of the articulators, and details which part of a word ending needs to be elongated for a syllable to sound the most accurate in singing. It also compares the sounds of Mandarin Chinese to English, but instead of equating the sounds of the two languages, it describes the tendencies of English speakers and the subtle differences between English and Chinese consonants and vowels, and prescribes solutions for some unfamiliar sounds.

By making Mandarin Chinese more accessible to singers through the use of a unified transliteration system (*Pinyin*) and a comprehensive diction guide, music in the Chinese language would be more approachable to non-Chinese speakers. With this solution, I hope that there will also be an increase in the performance of Chinese music in the US, even if the issues of copyright and publication of works from China are more difficult to resolve.

Conclusion

China has a significant presence in the classical music world, primarily through the fame of a number of pianists and string players who perform internationally. Now, China is gaining an increasing presence in the choral world as well. For instance, the Shenzhen Golden Bell Youth Choir is becoming internationally recognized. They performed at the ACDA Midwest conference in 2018 and were scheduled to perform at the World Symposium on Choral Music in Auckland 2020 before it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A concert featuring the music of Chen and Zhou was a major performance at the ACDA National Conference in Kansas City in 2019. As China continues to have a greater presence in choral music, it would stand to reason that there would be a greater market for Chinese choral music, both for diplomatic purposes (US choirs touring in China/Taiwan/Hong Kong) and naturally increased interest due to the presence of Chinese choirs in the US.

With the increase in the market and production of "world music" comes the time for not just the inclusion of other cultures, but the inclusion of music from their original sources. Although there are no simple solutions to the issue of copyright, publication, and distribution of choral works from China, the diction guide in the next section is a good start to solving one of barriers to performing this music. Unifying the transliteration to *Pinyin* of all publications of Chinese choral music in the United States is another simple solution to these problems. It is high time to address some of the issues of accessibility to Chinese choral music in order to fulfill an increasing desire for diverse repertoire.

Part II: Mandarin Chinese Diction Guide for English Speakers

For many years, I have observed that English-speaking choirs are hesitant to sing in Chinese. Perhaps one of the reasons is that in my years of Chinese language courses, linguistics classes, and as a music student, I have noticed that Native English speakers often describe Mandarin Chinese[36] as one of the most difficult languages to learn. For Native English speakers learning Chinese, the difficulties lie in using unfamiliar characters for the written language (as opposed to the Roman alphabet) and the use of tones for speaking (as opposed to only syllabic stress). In singing Chinese choral music, we will use neither characters nor tones, and although the *Pinyin* romanization system is not necessarily intuitive, the rules for pronunciation of a relatively small set of syllable sounds are consistent.

In my experience as a conductor in talking about Chinese choral music and diction, the number one question that conductors and vocalists ask me is, "If Chinese is a tonal language, how do we sing the tones?" Tones in Chinese have no effect on pronouncing words in pitched Chinese choral music. Because most choral and vocal music is notated and pitched, the tones are disregarded. In essence, the notated pitch of a word trumps the tone of the word.

After explaining this concept, the follow-up question I am asked is, "But if a word is stripped of its tone, how do we know what it means?" First, it is true that each word in Chinese has a specific tone and changing that tone can alter the meaning of the word. The most commonly used example to demonstrate this concept is the word "*ma"*:

Mā (妈) means "mother."
Má (麻) means "hemp."
Mǎ (马) means "horse."
Mà (吗) means "to scold."

[36] For the purposes of this document, "Mandarin Chinese" will hereafter be referred to as "Chinese." The term "Chinese" in English generally encompasses all dialects of Chinese including Cantonese. However, because I will only be discussing Mandarin Chinese in this document, I will simply use the term "Chinese."

Second, although each of the above words is only one syllable, Chinese is often misconstrued as being a mono-syllabic language. One of the first things a student might learn in a Chinese language course is that most words in Chinese are actually two syllables. The difference between European syllabic languages and Chinese is that in Chinese, each syllable is also its own word. For example, in the two-syllable word *píngguǒ* (苹果), *píngguǒ* (苹果) means "apple," but its syllabic parts can be broken down into the words *píng* (苹), which is a kind of sagebrush, and *guǒ* (果), which means fruit. Therefore, even if one is singing a melody with no regard for the tones (or speaking with the incorrect tones), the language can still be understood through context.

In any language every syllable is made up of one or more parts, an initial (sometimes called a "beginning sound") and a final (or an "ending sound").[37] In Chinese, syllables will at the least consist of an ending sound and most also have a beginning sound. There are a limited number of combinations of beginning and ending sounds. Table 1 shows all possible combinations of beginning and ending sounds complete with their corresponding International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols. Note that the words in the first column consist *only* of ending sounds.

The words in the *Pinyin* romanization chart are the only words that appear in Mandarin Chinese. If a word encountered in a Chinese song is not one listed in the chart, either the piece is transliterated and not *Pinyin*, there is an error, or it is written in a dialect.

[37] Lin Yen-Hwei, *The Sounds of Chinese* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 107.

Table 1: *Pinyin* beginnings and endings chart with IPA.

											Beginnings		
			b [b]	p [pʰ]	m [m]	f [f]	d [d]	t [tʰ]	n [n]	l [l]	g [g]	k [kʰ]	h [x]
	i (retroflex) [ɻ]												
	a [a]	a [a]	ba [ba]	pa [pʰa]	ma [ma]	fa [fa]	da [da]	ta [tʰa]	na [na]	la [la]	ga [ga]	ka [kʰa]	ha [xa]
	ai [aːɪ]	ai [aːɪ]	bai [baːɪ]	pai [pʰaːɪ]	mai [maːɪ]		dai [daːɪ]	tai [tʰaːɪ]	nai [naːɪ]	lai [laːɪ]	gai [gaːɪ]	kai [kʰaːɪ]	hai [xaːɪ]
	an [an]	an [an]	ban [ban]	pan [pʰan]	man [man]	fan [fan]	dan [dan]	tan [tʰan]	nan [nan]	lan [lan]	gan [gan]	kan [kʰan]	han [xan]
	ang [aŋ]	ang [aŋ]	bang [baŋ]	pang [pʰaŋ]	mang [maŋ]	fang [faŋ]	dang [daŋ]	tang [tʰaŋ]	nang [naŋ]	lang [laŋ]	gang [gaŋ]	kang [kʰaŋ]	hang [xaŋ]
	ao [ɑːʊ]	ao [ɑːʊ]	bao [bɑːʊ]	pao [pʰɑːʊ]	mao [mɑːʊ]		dao [dɑːʊ]	tao [tʰɑːʊ]	nao [nɑːʊ]	lao [lɑːʊ]	gao [gɑːʊ]	kao [kʰɑːʊ]	hao [xɑːʊ]
	e [ɤːə]	e [ɤːə]			me [mɤːə]		de [dɤːə]	te [tʰɤːə]	ne [nɤːə]	le [lɤːə]	ge [gɤːə]	ke [kʰɤːə]	he [xɤːə]
	ei [eːɪ]	ei [eːɪ]	bei [beːɪ]	pei [pʰeːɪ]	mei [meːɪ]	fei [feːɪ]	dei [deːɪ]		nei [neːɪ]	lei [leːɪ]	gei [geːɪ]		hei [xeːɪ]
	en [ɤn]	en [ɤn]	ben [bɤn]	pen [pʰɤn]	men [mɤn]	fen [fɤn]			nen [nɤn]		gen [gɤn]	ken [kʰɤn]	hen [xɤn]
	eng [ɤŋ]	eng [ɤŋ]	beng [bɤŋ]	peng [pʰɤŋ]	meng [mɤŋ]	feng [fɤŋ]	deng [dɤŋ]	teng [tʰɤŋ]	neng [nɤŋ]	leng [lɤŋ]	geng [gɤŋ]	keng [kʰɤŋ]	heng [xɤŋ]
	er [ar]	er [ar]											
	i [i]	yi [i]	bi [bi]	pi [pʰi]	mi [mi]		di [di]	ti [tʰi]	ni [ni]	li [li]			
	ia [ja]	ya [ja]					dia [dja]			lia [lja]			
	ian [jɛn]	yan [jɛn]	bian [bjɛn]	pian [pʰjɛn]	mian [mjɛn]		dian [djɛn]	tian [tʰjɛn]	nian [njɛn]	lian [ljɛn]			
	iang [jaŋ]	yang [jaŋ]							niang [njaŋ]	liang [ljaŋ]			
Endings	iao [jɑːʊ]	yao [jɑːʊ]	biao [bjɑːʊ]	piao [pʰjɑːʊ]	miao [mjɑːʊ]		diao [djɑːʊ]	tiao [tʰjɑːʊ]	niao [njɑːʊ]	liao [ljɑːʊ]			
	ie [jɛ]	ye [jɛ]	bie [bjɛ]	pie [pʰjɛ]	mie [mjɛ]		die [djɛ]	tie [tʰjɛ]	nie [njɛ]	lie [ljɛ]			
	in [in]	yin [in]	bin [bin]	pin [pʰin]	min [min]				nin [nin]	lin [lin]			
	ing [iŋ]	ying [iŋ]	bing [biŋ]	ping [pʰiŋ]	ming [miŋ]		ding [diŋ]	ting [tʰiŋ]	ning [niŋ]	ling [liŋ]			
	iong [joŋ]	yong [joŋ]											
	iou [jou]	you [jou]			miu [mjou]		diu [djou]		niu [njou]	liu [ljou]			
	o [ɔ]	o [ɔ]	bo [bwɔ]	po [pʰwɔ]	mo [mwɔ]	fo [fwɔ]							
	ong [oŋ]						dong [doŋ]	tong [tʰoŋ]	nong [noŋ]	long [loŋ]	gong [goŋ]	kong [kʰoŋ]	hong [xoŋ]
	ou [oːʊ]	ou [oːʊ]		pou [pʰoːʊ]	mou [moːʊ]	fou [foːʊ]	dou [doːʊ]	tou [tʰoːʊ]		lou [loːʊ]	gou [goːʊ]	kou [kʰoːʊ]	hou [xoːʊ]
	u [u]	wu [u]	bu [bu]	pu [pʰu]	mu [mu]	fu [fu]	du [du]	tu [tʰu]	nu [nu]	lu [lu]	gu [gu]	ku [kʰu]	hu [xu]
	ua [wa]	wa [wa]									gua [gwa]	kua [kʰwa]	hua [xwa]
	uai [waːɪ]	wai [waːɪ]									guai [gwaːɪ]	kuai [kʰwaːɪ]	huai [xwaːɪ]
	uan [wan]	wan [wan]					duan [dwan]	tuan [tʰwan]	nuan [nwan]	luan [lwan]	guan [gwan]	kuan [kʰwan]	huan [xwan]
	uang [waŋ]	wang [waŋ]									guang [gwaŋ]	kuang [kʰwaŋ]	huang [xwaŋ]
	uei [weːɪ]	wei [weːɪ]					dui [dweːɪ]	tui [tʰweːɪ]			gui [gweːɪ]	kui [kʰweːɪ]	hui [xweːɪ]
	uen [wɤn]	wen [wɤn]					dun [dwɤn]	tun [tʰwɤn]		lun [lwɤn]	gun [gwɤn]	kun [kʰwɤn]	hun [xwɤn]
	ueng [wɤŋ]	weng [wɤŋ]											
	uo [wɔ]	wo [wɔ]					duo [dwɔ]	tuo [tʰwɔ]	nuo [nwɔ]	luo [lwɔ]	guo [gwɔ]	kuo [kʰwɔ]	huo [xwɔ]
	ü [y]	yu [y]							nü [ny]	lü [ly]			
	üan [ɥan]	yuan [ɥan]											
	üe [ɥɛ]	yue [jɥɛ]							nüe [nɥɛ]	lüe [lɥɛ]			
	ün [ɥn]	yun [ɥn]											

j [tɕ]	q [tɕʰ]	x [ɕ]	z [dz]	c [tsʰ]	s [s]	zh [dʒ]	ch [tʂʰ]	sh [ʂ]	r [ɻ]
			zi [dzɻ]	ci [tsʰɻ]	si [sɻ]	zhi [dʒɻ]	chi [tʂʰɻ]	shi [ʂɻ]	ri [ɻɻ]
			za [dza]	ca [tsʰa]	[sa]	zha [dʒa]	cha [tʂʰa]	sha [ʂa]	
			zai [dza:ɪ]	cai [tsʰa:ɪ]	sai [sa:ɪ]	zhai [dʒa:ɪ]	chai [tʂʰa:ɪ]	shai [ʂa:ɪ]	
			zan [dzan]	can [tsʰan]	san [san]	zhan [dʒan]	chan [tʂʰan]	shan [ʂan]	ran [ɻan]
			zang [dzaŋ]	cang [tsʰaŋ]	sang [saŋ]	zhang [dʒaŋ]	chang [tʂʰaŋ]	shang [ʂaŋ]	rang [ɻaŋ]
			zao [dzɑ:ʊ]	cao [tsʰɑ:ʊ]	sao [sɑ:ʊ]	zhao [dʒɑ:ʊ]	chao [tʂʰɑ:ʊ]	shao [ʂɑ:ʊ]	rao [ɻɑ:ʊ]
			ze [dzɤ:ə]	ce [tsʰɤ:ə]	se [sɤ:ə]	zhe [dʒɤ:ə]	che [tʂʰɤ:ə]	she [ʂɤ:ə]	re [ɻɤ:ə]
			zei [dze:ɪ]			zhei [dʒe:ɪ]		shei [ʂe:ɪ]	
			zen [dzɤn]	cen [tsʰɤn]	sen [sɤn]	zhen [dʒɤn]	chen [tʂʰɤn]	shen [ʂɤn]	ren [ɻɤn]
			zeng [dzɤŋ]	ceng [tsʰɤŋ]	seng [sɤŋ]	zheng [dʒɤŋ]	cheng [tʂʰɤŋ]	sheng [ʂɤŋ]	reng [ɻɤŋ]
ji [tɕi]	qi [tɕʰi]	xi [ɕi]							
jia [tɕja]	qia [tɕʰja]	xia [ɕja]							
jian [tɕjɛn]	qian [tɕʰjɛn]	xian [ɕjɛn]							
jiang [tɕjaŋ]	qiang [tɕʰjaŋ]	xiang [ɕjaŋ]							
jiao [tɕjɑ:ʊ]	qiao [tɕʰjɑ:ʊ]	xiao [ɕjɑ:ʊ]							
jie [tɕjɛ]	qie [tɕʰjɛ]	xie [ɕjɛ]							
jin [tɕin]	qin [tɕʰin]	xin [ɕin]							
jing [tɕiŋ]	qing [tɕʰiŋ]	xing [ɕiŋ]							
jiong [tɕjoŋ]	qiong [tɕʰjoŋ]	xiong [ɕjoŋ]							
jiu [tɕjou]	qiu [tɕʰjou]	xiu [ɕjou]							
			zong [dzoŋ]	cong [tsʰoŋ]	song [soŋ]	zhong [dʒoŋ]	chong [tʂʰoŋ]		rong [ɻoŋ]
			zou [dzo:ʊ]	cou [tsʰo:ʊ]	sou [so:ʊ]	zhou [dʒo:ʊ]	chou [tʂʰo:ʊ]	shou [ʂo:ʊ]	rou [ɻo:ʊ]
			zu [dzu]	cu [tsʰu]	su [su]	zhu [dʒu]	chu [tʂʰu]	shu [ʂu]	ru [ɻu]
						zhua [dʒwa]		shua [ʂwa]	
						zhuai [dʒwa:ɪ]	chuai [tʂʰwa:ɪ]	shuai [ʂwa:ɪ]	
			zuan [dzwan]	cuan [tsʰwan]	suan [swan]	zhuan [dʒwan]	chuan [tʂʰwan]	shuan [ʂwan]	ruan [ɻwan]
						zhuang [dʒwaŋ]	chuang [tʂʰwaŋ]	shuang [ʂwaŋ]	
			zui [dzwe:ɪ]	cui [tsʰwe:ɪ]	sui [swe:ɪ]	zhui [dʒwe:ɪ]	chui [tʂʰwe:ɪ]	shui [ʂwe:ɪ]	rui [ɻwe:ɪ]
			zun [dzwɤn]	cun [tsʰwɤn]	sun [swɤn]	zhun [dʒwɤn]	chun [tʂʰwɤn]	shun [ʂwɤn]	run [ɻwɤn]
			zuo [dzwɔ]	cuo [tsʰwɔ]	suo [swɔ]	zhuo [dʒwɔ]	chuo [tʂʰwɔ]	shuo [ʂwɔ]	ruo [ɻwɔ]
ju [tɕy]	qu [tɕʰy]	xu [ɕy]							
juan [tɕɥan]	quan [tɕʰɥan]	xuan [ɕɥan]							
jue [tɕɥɤ]	que [tɕʰɥɤ]	xue [ɕɥɤ]							
jun [tɕɥn]	qun [tɕʰɥn]	xun [ɕɥn]							

Using IPA Symbols

IPA is used in singing for two primary reasons. First, Joan Wall notes that Americans sometimes do not have an awareness for the sounds of English and often confuse letters for sounds in words.[38] She uses the example of asking someone how many vowel sounds exist in English. They are likely to respond with "five," meaning "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u." However, Wall notes that there are actually twenty-two vowel sounds.[39] Each sound in IPA is designated its own symbol. One symbol stands for one sound, so there is no confusion as to how any given symbol is pronounced, unlike a letter in English that may change pronunciation depending on its place in a word or its etymology.

Second, as Wall argues because one symbol stands for one sound, once one is familiar with IPA, the symbols are applicable to any other language. Therefore, there is no need to know how a language pronounces a letter in comparison to English (i.e., whether a "c" is hard or soft, whether a "p" is plosive or not, etc.). Thus, IPA symbols are universal: [k] will always sound like the letter "k," [p^h] will always be a plosive "p," and so on.

With an English transliteration, an editor or composer equates every sound of another language to one with English, therefore the language will inherently sound less authentic than using *Pinyin* or IPA. One of the benefits of IPA is that IPA removes many of the direct sound equivalencies to the speaker's native language and presents sounds in their truer forms. For example, the Chinese word *qi*, meaning "air," might be transliterated as "chee" by a native English speaker. But with IPA, one would see that the word *qi* is actually pronounced [tɕ^{h}i] and not the Anglicized "chee" ([tʃi] in IPA, explained in further detail in the following pages). The consonants of the two versions of the word are actually slightly different and IPA helps to denote that difference.

Although IPA is one of the solutions to the pronunciation of a language, it still has its shortcomings. Overall, IPA helps to unify the sounds of a choir because there are limited and more subtle

[38] Joan Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and foreign language diction*, (Dallas: Pst...Inc., 1989), 2.

[39] Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*, 2.

variations to how each sound is pronounced when compared to the romanization or transliteration of a language. Every language uses a subset of IPA symbols and many of those symbols overlap with the IPA subsets of other languages. However, every language also has its own color to those subsets and the color of a language cannot be accurately reproduced through IPA alone. For example, both Chinese and English use the vowel [i] in their IPA subsets. When I pronounce the word "cheese" [tʃiz], the [i] vowel sits in the center of my mouth and I can feel the air vibrating on the high point of my hard palate. But when I pronounce the Chinese word *qi*, "air" [tɕʰi], the [i] vowel vibrates closer to my alveolar ridge. This difference in vowel quality is in part due to the slightly different location of the articulators for the beginning consonant and in part due to Chinese closed vowels being generally more focused than the ones used in American English. In English, the words "cat," "shadow," and "thanks" all use the symbol [æ] for their primary vowel sound, but the [æ] vowel for each of those words is pronounced slightly differently. These subtle differences cannot be expressed through IPA symbols alone. As a result, vocalists and conductors whose native language is English will still often compare the IPA of any language to how they pronounce the English IPA subset unless an IPA symbol is unique to another language.

As a biracial, Chinese-American conductor, I had the benefit of growing up in a household that used both Mandarin Chinese and English. Unlike other diction guides and linguistics books written by first-language-Chinese authors or first-language-English authors, my intent is to not compare Chinese sounds to English ones or vice versa. Their respective pronunciation is distinctive in my mind. Additionally, because I have heard many native English speakers speaking Chinese through Chinese language courses, I am also able to identify American tendencies and how to correct these pronunciation issues.

The guide that follows assumes that the reader has prior knowledge of IPA used for English diction.[40] For the scope of this project, I will only be discussing the sounds used in Mandarin Chinese, with pronunciation based on the Beijing dialect, which is considered "Standard Chinese." As a choral conductor, I want to give my English-speaking choirs every opportunity to succeed at pronouncing Chinese. Therefore, this diction guide is not intended to be a linguistic study, but instead a tool that choral conductors and vocalists would both find useful. The IPA I have chosen to represent certain sounds is, first, the IPA that I have found to most accurately represent Chinese in singing and, second, the most efficient IPA I have found to use as a teaching tool for vocalists. The best way to authentically represent Chinese in a choral work is through consultation with a native speaker, but if finding a native speaker is not possible, the IPA will be a significant improvement over any transliteration.[41]

Comparing Available IPA Systems

Currently, there are very few reputable sources on Chinese diction for singers. For sung Chinese, there are many quick guides, particularly in published Chinese works that use *Pinyin*. Criddle, Chen, and Witzenberg all provide brief pronunciation guides at the beginning of their choral works. In the book *The Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet in the Choral Rehearsal*, soprano and professor of voice at Ball State University Mei Zhong provides another very brief diction guide. The intent of these shorter guides is to provide a workable IPA or pronunciation system that will produce immediate results. The primary published source for spoken Chinese diction is *The Sounds of Chinese* by linguist Yen-Hwei Lin published by Cambridge University Press.[42] In the diction portion of the book, Lin describes in great detail the articulatory processes and phonology of spoken Chinese.

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[40] For an introduction to IPA and the articulators, please consult Wall's *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*, or John Moriarty's *Diction Italian, Latin, French, German* (Boston: EC Schirmer Music Co., 1975).

[41] If you are interested in learning more about the linguistic aspects of spoken Chinese, *The Sounds of Chinese* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) by Lin Yen-Hwei or *The Phonology of Standard Chinese* (Oxford University Press, 2007) by San Duanmu are both excellent resources.

[42] Yen-Hwei Lin will henceforth be referred to as "Lin" for the remainder of this document.

There are a number of issues with the existing diction guides. For the "quick guides" (the guides that accompany musical scores and Mei's guide), the sounds of *Pinyin* are all assigned an English sound equivalent. Criddle, Chen, Witzenberg, and Mei are not linguists, nor are any of them native speakers of *both* Chinese and English. Therefore, assigning an English IPA sound to a Chinese one (even if the IPA symbol is not wholly accurate) might be how they are able to produce those Chinese or English words, but their native language will always influence the pronunciation of their second language. In other words, a sound in Chinese that is assigned an English IPA equivalent is going to result in an inauthentic reproduction of Chinese and vice versa.

Lin's book, *The Sounds of Chinese,* is approached from a linguistic perspective. Her intent is to describe the physical way the sounds are reproduced and, because her first language is Chinese, the sounds are completely removed from any English sound equivalencies. The result is an IPA subset that is more accurate to the true sounds of Chinese and one that has many differences from the English IPA subset. When applied to singing, however, using Lin's IPA system also has some problems. First, Lin's book is about spoken Chinese, which like English, is slightly different when sung. Second, Lin's consonant IPA subset, although accurate, is perhaps a little too specific for functional usage with English-speaking choirs. For example, Lin uses the symbol [t] (unaspirated [t]) for the beginning letter "d" in *Pinyin*. Mei, Chen, and Witzenberg all use [d] for the same sound. The [t] and [d] sounds are made with the exact same articulator placement, but the [d] is voiced. I would guess that Mei, Chen, and Witzenberg all use [d] in place of unaspirated [t] because in sung Chinese, the [d] is close enough to approximate the sound of the [t] and the [d] matches the appearance of beginning letter "d" on the page. For a conductor to use Lin's [t], they would have to take the time to explain the concept of aspiration, that [t] is not a sound that normally appears at the beginning of words in English, and still be able to differentiate it with [t^h], a sound that also appears in Chinese.[43] Using [d] is close enough to the authentic sound and knowing how to produce the sound will be innate to an English-speaking choir. Third, the IPA Lin chooses for

[43] French and Italian both use [t] at the beginnings of words, however, [t^h] is never used, thereby removing the issue of having to differentiate the two sounds, only the correct pronunciation of [t].

many of the Chinese vowel sounds will not yield the most accurate result for reproducing Chinese when sung.

IPA for Mandarin Chinese

In Tables 2 and 3, I compare *Pinyin* sounds with the two published IPA subsets for Chinese diction created by Lin and Mei. Alongside these two subsets is my own subset of suggested IPA symbols that I have found to be the most successful and efficient in authentically reproducing Chinese with English-speaking vocalists and choirs. Mei's IPA subset is incomplete in the book *The Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet in the Choral Rehearsal*, and one symbol is completely incorrect.[44] Lin's IPA is mostly accurate for spoken Chinese, but some of the consonants have been adjusted for convenience (but will yield essentially the same result) and many of the vowel sounds have been adjusted either because they are better for singing or because I believed Lin's choice of symbol to be an inaccurate representation of the sound.[45] Each symbol is explained in more detail on the following pages.

IPA: Beginning Sounds

Many beginning sounds in *Pinyin* are equivalent (or close enough) to their English counterparts. All beginnings are described in greater detail below. All sounds on this chart are organized according to where the sounds occur in the mouth, starting with the most forward and moving back.

Table 2: A comparative chart of IPA options for *Pinyin beginning sounds.*

Pinyin	Lin's IPA	Mei's IPA	Cai Suggested IPA
b	[p]	[b]	[b]
p	[p^h]	[p]	[p^h]
m	[m]	[m]	[m]
f	[f]	[f]	[f]
d	[t]	[d]	[d]

[44] Mei Zhong, "Chinese Pronunciation Guide for Western Singers," in *The Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet in the Choral Rehearsal* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 135-139.

[45] Lin, *The Sounds of Chinese*, 283-292.

t	[tʰ]	[ts] (believed to be in error)	[tʰ]
n	[n]	[n]	[n]
l	[l]	[l]	[l]
g	[k]	[g]	[g]
k	[kʰ]	[k]	[kʰ]
h	[x]	[h]	[x]
j	[tɕ]	[dʒ]	[tɕ]
q	[tɕʰ]	[tʃː]	[tɕʰ]
x	[ɕ]	[ʃː]	[ɕ]
z	[ts]	[dz]	[dz]
c	[tsʰ]	[ts]	[tsʰ]
s	[s]	[s]	[s]
zh	[tʂ]	[dʒː]	[dʒ]
ch	[tʂʰ]	[tʃ]	[tʃ]
sh	[ʂ]	[ʃ]	[ʂ]
r	[ɻ]	[r]	[ɻ]

IPA: Ending Sounds

All Chinese words consist of at least an ending sound. The IPA for ending sounds tend to vary more than beginning sounds, depending on the author. I have chosen IPA symbols that I have used for Chinese songs that will produce the most accurate representation of the end sound as well as the most optimal vowel for singing. The sounds on this chart are organized alphabetically (with the exception of the retroflex "i"). Note that some ending sounds appear differently depending on what beginning (if any) precedes it. Despite the spelling differences, the sounds are the same. These variations are listed parenthetically in the *Pinyin* column in Table 3. Each ending sound is described in more detail below.

Table 3: A comparative chart of IPA options for *Pinyin* ending sounds.

Pinyin	**Lin's IPA**	**Mei's IPA**	**Cai Suggested IPA**
i (retroflex)	[ɻ]	[ih]	[ɻ]
a	[a]	[a]	[a]
ai	[ai]	[ai]	[aːɪ]
an	[an]	[an]	[an]
ang	[ɑŋ]	[aŋ]	[aŋ]
ao	[ɑu]	[au]	[ɑːʊ]
e	[ɤ]	[ə]	[ɤːə]
ei	[ei]	[ei]	[eːɪ]
en	[ən]	[en]	[ɤn]
eng	[əŋ]	[eŋ]	[ɤŋ]
er	[əɻ]	None listed	[ar]
i	[i]	[i]	[i]
ia (ya)	[ja]	None listed	[ja]
ian (yan)	[jɛn]	[ian]	[jɛn]

iang (yang)	[jɑŋ]	[iaŋ] [jaŋ]	[jɑŋ]
iao (yao)	[jɑu]	[iau]	[jɑːʊ]
ie (ye)	[je]	None listed	[jɛ]
in (yin)	[in]	[in]	[in]
ing (ying)	[iŋ]	[iŋ]	[iŋ]
iong (yong)	[juŋ]	[iɔŋ]	[joŋ]
iou (you)	[jou]	[iu] [ju]	[jɔːʊ]
o	[ɔ]	[ɔ]	[ɔ] [wɔ]
ong	[uŋ]	[ɔŋ]	[oŋ]
ou	[ou]	[əu]	[oːʊ]
u (wu)	[u]	[u]	[u]
ua (wa)	[wa]	[wa]	[wa]
uai (wai)	[wai]	[wai]	[waːɪ]
uan (wan)	[wan]	[wan]	[wan]
uang (wang)	[wɑŋ]	[uaŋ]	[wɑŋ]
uei (wei) (ui)	[wei]	[uei]	[weːɪ]
uen (wen)	[wən]	[uen]	[wɤn]
ueng (weng)	[wəŋ]	[ueŋ]	[wɤŋ]

uo (wo)	[wo]	[wo]	[wɔ]
ü (yu)	[ɥy]	[y]	[y]
üan (yuan)	[ɥyɛn]	[yan]	[ɥan]
üe (yue)	[ɥe]	[yɛ]	[ɥɤ]
ün (yun)	[ɥyn]	[yn]	[ɥyn]

Beginning Sounds

Below are in-depth descriptions for the pronunciation of each beginning sound in Mandarin Chinese. I have categorized them in four sections:

1) Consonants similar to English
   b, d, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, t
2) Velar
   h
3) Dental affricates and fricative
   c, s, z
4) Post-alveolar and alveolo-palatal consonants
   j, q, x, zh, ch, sh, r

Consonants similar to English: b, d, f, g, k, l, m, n, p, t

These sounds appear in alphabetical order.

b [b]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -ei, -en, -eng, -i, -ian, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -o, -u
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ba, bai, ban, bang, bao, bei, ben, beng, bi, bian, biao, bie, bin, bing, bo, bu

Lin's IPA: [p]
Mei's IPA: [b]

Lin suggests [p] without aspiration as the IPA for this beginning sound, but because this sound does not appear at the beginning of an English word, English speakers often have difficulty differentiating [p] with [p^h] (as in the word "pan" [p^hæn]). For practical purposes, it is easier to think of this sound as the same as [b] as in "band" ([bænd]) in English. The [b] will yield essentially the same result as the unaspirated [p]. Mei Zhong's IPA also suggests [b] as the pronunciation for this letter.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same as in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

d [d]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -eng, -i, -ia, -ian, -iao, -ie, -ing, -iu, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: da, dai, dan, dang, dao, de, dei, deng, di, dia, dian, diao, die, ding, diu, dong, dou, du, duan, dui, dun, duo

Lin's IPA: [t^h]
Mei's IPA: [d]

Lin suggests [t] without aspiration as the IPA for this beginning sound, but because this sound does not appear at the beginning of an English word, English speakers often have difficulty differentiating [t] with

[t^h] (as in the word "tan" [t^hæn]). For practical purposes, it is easier to think of this sound as the same as [d] as in "den" ([dɛn]) in English. The [d] will yield essentially the same result as the unaspirated [t]. Mei Zhong's IPA also suggests [d] as the pronunciation for this letter.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same as in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

f [f]	Appears before -a, -an, -ang, -ei, -en, -eng, -o, -ou, -u
	Possible *Pinyin* words: fa, fan, fang, fei, fen, feng, fo, fou, fu

Lin's IPA: [f]
Mei's IPA: [f]

Pronounced the same as [f] in English.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English-speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

g [g]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -ua, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ga, gai, gan, gang, gao, ge, gei, gen, geng, gong, gou, gu, gua, guai, guan, guang, gui, gun, guo

Lin's IPA: [k]
Mei's IPA: [g]

Lin suggests [k] without aspiration as the IPA for this beginning sound, but because this sound does not appear at the beginning of an English word, English speakers often have difficulty differentiating [k] with [k^h] (as in the word "can" [k^hæn]). For practical purposes, it is easier to think of this sound as the same as [g] as in "give" ([gɪv]) in English. The [g] will yield essentially the same result as the unaspirated [k]. Mei Zhong's IPA also suggests [g] as the pronunciation for this letter.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English-speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

k [k^h]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -ua, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ka, kai, kan, kang, kao, ke, ken, keng, kong, kou, ku, kua, kuai, kuan, kuang, kui, kun, kuo

Lin's IPA: [k^h]
Mei's IPA: [k]

Pronounced the same as the beginning hard "k" sound in English, as in the word "can" ([k^han]).

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

l [l]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -eng, -i, -ia, -ian, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iu, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -un, -uo, ü, üe
	Possible *Pinyin* words: la, lai, lan, lang, lao, le, lei, leng, li, lia, lian, liao, lie, lin, ling, liu, long, lou, lu, luan, lun, luo, lü, lue

Lin's IPA: [l]
Mei's IPA: [l]

Pronounced more like the sung English [l] than the dentalized Italian [l].

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

m [m]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -i, -ian, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iu, -o, -ou, -u
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ma, mai, man, mang, mao, me, mei, men, meng, mi, mian, miao, mie, min, ming, miu, mo, mou, mu

Lin's IPA: [m]
Mei's IPA: [m]

Pronounced the same as [m] in English.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

n [n]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -i, -ian, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iu, -ong, -u, -uan, -uo, ü, üe
	Possible *Pinyin* words: na, nai, nan, nang, nao, ne, nei, nen, neng, ni, nian, niao, nie, nin, ning, niu, nong, nu, nuan, nuo, nü, nue

Lin's IPA: [n]
Mei's IPA: [n]

Pronounced the same as English [n].

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

p [p^h]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -ei, -en, -eng, -i, -ian, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -o, -ou, u
	Possible *Pinyin* words: pa, pai, pan, pang, pao, pei, pen, peng, pi, pian, piao, pie, pin, ping, po, pou, pu

Lin's IPA: [p^h]
Mei's IPA: [p]

Pronounced the same as "p" as in "pan" ([p^hæn]), "p" as it appears at the beginning of an English word.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same as in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

t [t^h]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -eng, -i, -ian, -iao, -ie, -ing, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ta, tai, tan, tang, tao, te, teng, ti, tian, tiao, tie, ting, tong, tou, tu, tuan, tui, tun, tuo

Lin's IPA: [t^h]
Mei's IPA: [t]

Pronounced the same as "t" as in "tan" ([t^hæn]), "t" as it appears at the beginning of an English word.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

Velar: h

h [x]	Appears before -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -ua, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ha, hai, han, hang, hao, he, hei, hen, heng, hong, hou, hu, hua, huai, huan, huang, hui, hun, huo

Lin's IPA: [x]
Mei's IPA: [h]

The IPA symbol [x] is the same for the German ach-laut and the Hebrew "chet" (ח). The Mandarin Chinese version is pronounced similarly to the German ach-laut, but the Mandarin [x] is significantly less guttural and more akin to a heavily pronounced [h] in the back of the throat. Mei's choice of [h] will not provide the fricative sound or correct placement that is used in Chinese.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will either leave out the fricative aspect of this sound in favor of an English [h] (as suggested in Mei's IPA) or will over-compensate by pronouncing the fricative too far back.

Dental affricates and fricative: c, s, z

The "c," "s," and "z" beginning sounds in *Pinyin* are articulated with the teeth and the tip of the tongue, as in the English [s] sound. Only the [s] sound appears at the beginning of words in English, but it might help native English speakers to note the following instruction from Lin:

> It is important to note that the upper and lower teeth are very close to each other when these consonants are pronounced, so the tip of the tongue may also end up in the middle of the front teeth between the upper and lower teeth.[46]

These sounds appear in alphabetical order.

c [tsʰ]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ci, ca, cai, can, cang, cao, ce, cen, ceng, cong, cou, cu, cuan, cui, cun, cuo

Lin's IPA: [tsʰ]
Mei's IPA: [ts]

This sound appears in English but never at the beginning of the word. It is pronounced the same as the end sound in the word "cats" [kʰæts] or the beginning "z" sound in German, as in the word "Zeit" ([tsʰait]).

Common tendencies: Native English speakers who have not sung in or studied German will often reduce the [tsʰ] to either [tʰ] or [s]. In this case, it helps to have them pronounce the word "pizza" [pʰitsa] and then isolate the second half of the word ([tsʰa]) until they can properly produce the sound in isolation.

s [s]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: si, sa, sai, san, sang, sao, se, sen, seng, song, sou, su, suan, sui, sun, suo

Lin's IPA: [s]
Mei's IPA: [s]

Pronounced the same as English [s].

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

[46] Lin, *The Sounds of Chinese,* 44.

z [dz]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: zi, za, zai, zan, zang, zao, ze, zei, zen, zeng, zong, zou, zu, zuan, zui, zun, zuo

Lin's IPA: [ts]
Mei's IPA: [dz]

With Lin's IPA, it is often too difficult for English speakers to differentiate the [ts] from the [ts^h]. Although the "z" is technically unvoiced, using [dz] with an English-speaking choir will generally produce the correct sound. The [dz] is pronounced as a combination of [d] and [z], as in the end of the word "beds" [bɛdz].

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to eliminate the [d] sound of the [dz] and over pronounce the [z], in part because of the "z" of the *Pinyin*. It is important to break down the sound into its component parts, both [d] and [z], to ensure proper pronunciation.

Post-alveolar and alveolo-palatal consonants: j, q, x, zh, ch, sh, r

The overly simplistic explanation of the spelled beginnings "zh" and "j," "ch" and "q," and "sh" and "x" is that they are equivalent to the English sounds [dʒ] (as in "justice"), [tʃ] (as in "China"), and [ʃ] (as in "shore"), respectively. However, "zh," "ch," and "sh" occur in a slightly different place in the mouth than "j," "q," and "x." Correct mouth placement for each of these sounds will also help ensure that the vowel is colored properly when singing in Mandarin. The correct pronunciation of the "j," "q," and "x" consonants will enable the vowels to be more closed and have a more focused sound which will sound more authentically Chinese. The following in-depth descriptions of the sounds are arranged in similar-sound pairs.

Lin describes the "zh," "ch," and "sh" sounds as "post-alveolars," noting that the primary difference between post-alveolar affricates and fricatives is that the blade of the tongue is used instead of the tip.[47] One can practice these sounds by holding the tongue position of English sound [ʃ], raising the tip of the tongue to post-alveolar position, and then flattening the tip of the tongue. The result should be more forceful air expelled from the mouth and a higher pitched fricative sound.

Lin suggests that in practicing alveolo-palatal "j," "q," and "x" sounds, one should practice the English [ʃ] in combination with the [i] vowel (as in the word "she" [ʃi]) and intentionally spread the lips.[48] Doing so will force the articulators into the approximately correct position. This process can also be repeated for [dʒ] and [tʃ]. In my experience, this lip-spreading will not always be necessary to produce the correct sound (and when followed by the [y] vowel, one will need to round the lips), but it will help an English-speaker feel where the articulators should be when producing the sounds and properly brighten and focus the [i] vowel.

[47] Lin, *The Sounds of Chinese,* 46.
[48] Lin, *The Sounds of Chinese,* 47.

j [tɕ]	Appears before -i, -ia, -ian, -iang, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iong, -iu, -u, -uan, -ue, -un
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ji, jia, jian, jiang, jiao, jie, jin, jing, jiong, jiu, ju, juan, jue, jun

Lin's IPA: [tɕ]
Mei's IPA: [dʒ]

Similar to an English [dʒ] (like "j" as in "joint"). However, I chose to use Lin's [tɕ] because the placement of the English [dʒ] and [tɕ] are different: [dʒ] occurs towards the center of the mouth and [tɕ] occurs behind the front teeth. The tip of the tongue is behind the bottom row of teeth while the top of the tongue creates the plosive against the alveolar ridge.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to articulate this sound too far back in the mouth, like an English [dʒ]. When pronounced correctly, the [tɕ] will feel like an extremely forward version of [dʒ].

zh [dʒ]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -ua, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: zhi, zha, zhai, zhan, zhang, zhao, zhe, zhei, zhen, zheng, zhong, zhou, zhu, zhua, zhuai, zhuan, zhuang, zhui, zhun, zhuo

Lin's IPA: [tʂ]
Mei's IPA: [dʒ:]

Essentially the same as [dʒ] as in "justice" ([ʤʌstɪs]). The "zh" sound is technically unvoiced, but using the [dʒ] with an English speaking choir will produce an accurate result if the end sound is also pronounced correctly.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

q [tɕʰ]	Appears before -i, -ia, -ian, -iang, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iong, -iu, -u, -uan, -ue, -un
	Possible *Pinyin* words: qi, qia, qian, qiang, qiao, qie, qin, qing, qiong, qiu, qu, quan, que, qun

Lin's IPA: [tɕʰ]
Mei's IPA: [tʃ:]

Similar to but should not be substituted with an English [tʃ] like "ch" as in "China." (See the description of "ch" below.) The primary difference between the two sounds is that [tʃ] occurs towards the center of the mouth, and [tɕʰ] occurs behind the front teeth. The tip of the tongue is behind the bottom row of teeth while the top of the tongue creates the plosive against the alveolar ridge. This placement is the exact same as the [tɕ] above but without the aspiration.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to articulate this sound too far back in the mouth, like an English [tʃ]. When pronounced correctly, the [tɕʰ] will feel like an extremely forward version of [tʃ].

ch [tʃ]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: chi, cha, chai, chan, chang, chao, che, chen, cheng, chong, chou, chu, chuai, chuan, chuang, chui, chun, chuo

Lin's IPA: [tʂʰ]
Mei's IPA: [tʃ]

Essentially the same as [tʃ] as in "China" ([tʃainə]). The Chinese "ch" is slightly more forward and focused, but [tʃ] will get a close enough result using an IPA with which English-speaking singers are familiar.

Common tendencies: Because this sound is the same in English, English speakers should have no problems with pronunciation.

x [ɕ]	Appears before -i, -ia, -ian, -iang, -iao, -ie, -in, -ing, -iong, -iu, -u, -uan, -ue, -un
	Possible *Pinyin* words: xi, xia, xian, xiang, xiao, xie, xin, xing, xiong, xiu, xu, xuan, xue, xun

Lin's IPA: [ɕ]
Mei's IPA: [ʃ:]

Similar to but should not be substituted with an English [ʃ] like "sh" as in "shine." (An English [ʃ] is not used in Chinese.) The primary difference between the two sounds is that [ɕ] occurs towards the center of the mouth, and [ʃ] occurs behind the front teeth. The tip of the tongue is behind the bottom row of teeth while the top of the tongue creates the fricative against the alveolar ridge.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to articulate this sound too far back in the mouth, like an English [ʃ]. When pronounced correctly, the [ɕ] will feel like an extremely forward version of [ʃ].

sh [ʂ]	Appears before -i, -a, -ai, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -ei, -en, -eng, -ou, -u, -ua, -uai, -uan, -uang, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: shi, sha, shai, shan, shang, shao, she, shei, shen, sheng, shou, shu, shua, shuai, shuan, shuang, shui, shun, shuo

Lin's IPA: [ʂ]
Mei's IPA: [ʃ]

Similar to but should not be substituted with an English [ʃ] like "sh" as in "shine," but while the fricative of the English [ʃ] tends to occur on the molars, the Chinese [ʂ] will occur behind the front teeth. When pronounced correctly, the air of the elongated fricative of the [ʂ] will be slightly higher pitched than the English [ʃ].

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to turn the Chinese [ʂ] into the English [ʃ], which will affect the pronunciation of the subsequent vowel sound.

Lin also classifies the [ɻ] as a post-alveolar consonant.

r **[ɻ]**	Appears before -i, -an, -ang, -ao, -e, -en, -eng, -ong, -ou, -u, -uan, -ui, -un, -uo
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ri, ran, rang, rao, re, ren, reng, rong, rou, ru, ruan, rui, run, ruo

Lin's IPA: [ɻ]
Mei's IPA: [r]

This is the most difficult consonant sound for Native English speakers to pronounce. Some Chinese choirs also have trouble singing this sound! The most successful way of teaching this sound that I have found is by telling the choir to form a burred [r] with the tongue while simultaneously pronouncing a [ʒ] (as in the word "garage" [garaʒ]). The resulting sound is quite different from an [r] and the distinction should be made even when sung. The "r" in Chinese should *not* be sung as a rolled or flipped [r].

Common tendencies: In my experience, because of the sound's unfamiliarity, native English speakers are unable to hear what the [ɻ] sound is at all and therefore cannot begin to reproduce it correctly. Generally, they will tend to cling to the *Pinyin*, and pronounce an American burred or rolled [r] instead. It helps to demonstrate the sound first, followed by describing the above process for creating the [ɻ].

End Sounds

In my experience, the biggest problems that native English speakers have when producing Chinese endings are:

1) Not producing an accurate vowel color for the vowels by either equating them with an English vowel or by creating a caricature of what they believe Chinese sounds like.
2) Struggling with moving quickly through the glides and diphthongs of certain endings.

The colors of the vowels are described in detail below. My goal is to describe how the vowels sound and not how they compare to English vowels. When a choir sings in Chinese having only heard the sounds compared to English they will sound more English or American than Chinese. Most Chinese vowels are actually more similar to Italian, German, or French ones than English ones. The understanding of the color of Chinese vowels as distinct from English will greatly assist teaching with this diction guide.

All consonants and glides ([j], [w], and [ɥ]) in sung Chinese should be moved through as quickly as possible. In the case of a diphthongs *-ai*, *-ao, -ei, iao, iou, -ou,* and *-uei/-ui//-wei,* the ending [i] and [u] sounds have been altered to their counterparts [ɪ] and [ʊ] in accordance with Madeleine Marshall and Joan Wall's rules of English diction. Although this subtle change in the vanishing vowel of a diphthong subscribes to the ideals of Western singing, there are practical applications to using these altered vowels. Marshall notes that using [i] and [u] at the ends of diphthongs distorts the words too much, giving the effect of "singing through a mouth full of food."[49] Wall argues that closing to [i] and [u] at the ends of diphthongs require too much movement in the jaw.[50] Kathryn LaBouff, professor of voice at the Manhattan School of Music, states that using [ɪ] and [ʊ] as the secondary vowels in diphthongs, "facilitate[s] less movement of the lips and jaws when singing."[51] The vanishing vowel sound is sung

[49] Madeleine Marshall, *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1953), 172.

[50] Wall, *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers*, 111.

[51] Kathryn LaBouff, *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 80.

only at the last possible moment. These adjustments will also be useful for the clarity and efficiency of singing Chinese diction as well.

In the guide that follows, the ending sounds are organized according to the dominant vowel when singing, meaning the vowel that should be sustained when singing a syllable. Further explanation is given for each individual sound, but the primary vowel will be essentially the same for the endings in each section.

Note that in the descriptions below, the umlaut is mostly used as a specific sign to help differentiate pronunciations in *Pinyin* and rarely do they show up in the *Pinyin* itself. Take for example, the difference between "nü/nu" and "lü/lu." "Nü" and "lü" in *Pinyin* are pronounced as [ny] and [ly] respectively, while "nu" and "lu" are pronounced as [nu] and [lu]. In the cases of these words, umlauts will appear over the "u" in order to differentiate these two endings. "Yu," "qu," "ju," and "xu" are only pronounced with an [y] ending and never a pure [u], therefore an umlaut is not needed to distinguish these endings.

[ɻ] retroflex

i (retroflex) [ɻ]	Appears after z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: zi, ci, si, zhi, chi, shi, ri

Lin's IPA: [ɻ]
Mei's IPA: [ih]

Pronounced like an extremely closed [ɪ] vowel. The tongue should be slightly curved, the edges of the tongue should lightly touch the insides of the molars, and the front of the tongue is flat. The lips will also stay open at the end of the sound. Practice by intoning a closed [ɪ] vowel and slowly shifting the tongue to a burred [r] position.

Lin's representation above of the [ɻ] vowel is the most accurate. It is likely that Mei's [ih] is probably pronounced as [ɪ], but [ih] is not an accurate representation of either [ɻ] or [ɪ]. Regardless, [ɻ] is the most accurate sound for the "i" vowel.

Common tendencies: The [ɻ] vowel is the most difficult for English speakers because there is nothing in English that can quite approximate this sound. English speakers will tend to turn the [ɻ] vowel into an [i] or an [ɪ]. For example, the word *chi* [tʂʰɻ] will become [tʃi] or [tʃɪ].

[a] dominant endings

The following endings are [a] dominant, meaning that the elongated vowel is [a]. The Mandarin [a] is similar to the French or German [a]. It is a brighter vowel than the English [a]. In an attempt to equivocate the Chinese [a] vowel to an English one, native English speakers will often turn it into an [ɑ], as in the word "father" ([fɑðər]) or an [æ], as in the word "man" ([mæn]).

a [a]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: a, ba, pa, ma, fa, da, ta, na, la, ga, ka, ha, za, ca, sa, zha, cha, sha

Lin's IPA: [a]
Mei's IPA: [a]

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken the [a] vowel.

ia, ya [ja]	Appears after d-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ya, dia, lia, jia, qia, xia

Lin's IPA: [ja]
Mei's IPA: None listed.

One should move through the [j] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [j] glide, inadvertently adding an [i] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the word "jia" ([tɕja]) in Chinese might become [tɕiya], a similar problem with "gia-" or "gio-" syllables in Italian.

ua, wa [wa]	Appears after g-, k-, h-, zh-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wa, gua, kua, hua, zhua, shua

Lin's IPA: [wa]
Mei's IPA: [wa]

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [w] glide, inadvertently adding an [u] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the Chinese word "gua" [kwa] might turn into [kuwa]. Native English speakers will also tend to over darken the [a] vowel.

ai [a:ɪ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ai, bai, pai, mai, dai, tai, nai, lai, gai, kai, hai, zai, cai, sai, zhai, chai, shai

Lin's IPA: [ai]
Mei's IPA: [ai]

The [i] vowel comes at the last possible moment of a sung note. This is an imperfect example, but the concept is the same as how one would sing the word "I" ([aɪ]).

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken the [a] vowel or to overdo the diphthong, elongating and over exaggerating the [i].

uai [wa:ɪ]	Appears after g-, k-, h-, zh-, ch-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wai, guai, kuai, huai, zhuai, chuai, shuai

Lin's IPA: [wai]
Mei's IPA: [wai]

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken the [a] vowel, elongate the [i] vowel, or to not move quickly enough through the [w] glide, inadvertently adding an [u] vowel.

an [an]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: an, ban, pan, man, fan, dan, tan, nan, lan, gan, kan, han, zan, can, san, zhan, chan, shan, ran

Lin's IPA: [an]
Mei's IPA: [an]

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will either tend to over darken the vowel, turning [an] into [ɑ], or they will attempt to equivocate it with the English [æ] as in the word "man" ([mæn]).

uan [wan]	Appears after d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wan, duan, tuan, nuan, luan, guan, kuan, huan, zuan, cuan, suan, zhuan, chuan, shuan, ruan

Lin's IPA: [wan]
Mei's IPA: [wan]

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will either tend to over darken the vowel, turning [an] into [ɑ], or they will attempt to equivocate it with the English [æ] as in the word "man" ([mæn]).

üan [ɥan]	Appears after j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yuan, juan, quan, xuan

Lin's IPA: [ɥyɛn]
Mei's IPA: [yan]

In the case of [ɥan], Lin's [ɥyɛn] and Mei's [yan] are not quite accurate. The [ɛ] is not a bright enough vowel for singing this particular ending and a singer will hardly spend any time on the [y] vowel, therefore [ɥan] will yield the most accurate result.

The Chinese [y] is pronounced the same as the German ü as in the *Pinyin* words "nü" [ny] or "lü" [ly]. In the case of the ending [ɥan], one should move as quickly through the [ɥ] as possible, in a similar manner to the [j] and [w] glides. This is to avoid mispronouncing the [ɥ] as a [y].

In order to rehearse this sound with a choir, it is best to practice separating the sound into [y] and [an]. Next, turn the [y] into a grace note followed by [an]. Finally, add the beginning sound to the word.

Common tendencies: English speakers will tend to turn the [y] vowel into an [u], over darken the [a] vowel, and add a [w] glide. For example, the word *yuan* [jyɛn] might become [juwɑn].

er [ar]	Appears after
	Possible *Pinyin* words: er

Lin's IPA: [əɻ]
Mei's IPA: None listed.

This ending only appears as is without a beginning sound. The words that use this ending sound (*ěr* ear, *èr* two, *ér* son, etc.) are common words but do not appear very frequently in choral music, although they are often used in children's songs.

This sound is pronounced slightly differently when spoken than sung. Lin's IPA suggests a darker vowel than what should actually be sustained when singing. When singing, *er* is pronounced almost as if one were saying the letter "r" in American English. The [a] vowel is slightly less bright than a German, French, or Italian bright [a] and is almost always short, moving to the [r] sound more quickly than when singing in English.

Common tendencies: As in English words, English speakers will tend to chew on the final [r] sound too much. The final [r] should sound as late and as fast as possible.

[ɑ] dominant endings

Mei uses [a] as the primary vowel for the following endings, in addition to the [a] dominant endings of the previous section.[52] Although the Chinese [ɑ] is brighter than it is in German, English, French, or Italian and lives in close proximity to the bright [a], the [ɑ] dominant endings are a slightly different vowel than the brighter [a]. For this reason, I agree with Lin's choice of IPA for these endings.

The Chinese [ɑ] is a darker vowel than the English [ɑ], as in the word "father" ([fɑðər]). However, native English speakers will either see the *Pinyin* and incorrectly pronounce the sound as [æŋ] (as in the English word "bang" [bæŋ]) or will over darken the vowel to [ɔ] (as in the English word "tong" [tɔŋ]). For example, the Chinese pianist Lang Lang's name is often incorrectly pronounced by Americans as [læŋ læŋ], but nor is it pronounced "Long Long" ([lɔŋ lɔŋ]). The correct vowel pronunciation lies between those two vowels.

ao [ɑːʊ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ao, bao, pao, mao, dao, tao, nao, lao, gao, kao, hao, zao, cao, sao, zhao, chao, shao, rao

Lin's IPA: [ɑu]
Mei's IPA: [au]

Mei's [au] is slightly too bright to represent this ending accurately.

The end [ʊ] sound is very quick and does not quite close to a true [u] sound, even at the very end of a sung note. The end [u] is more open, similar to the German [ɑu] of "Bauer" [bɑuɐ].

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over exaggerate the [u] of the diphthong, closing the vowel too much or elongating it.

[52] Zhong, "Chinese Pronunciation," 136.

iao, yao [jɑːʊ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yao, biao, piao, miao, diao, tiao, niao, liao, jiao, qiao, xiao

Lin's IPA: [jɑu]
Mei's IPA: [au]

Mei's [au] is slightly too bright and it does not include a [j] glide, which differentiates the *-iao* ending from the *-ao* ending.

One should move through the [j] glide as quickly as possible. The end [ʊ] sound is very quick and does not quite close to a true [u] sound, even at the very end of a sung note. The end [ʊ] is more open, similar to the German [ɑu].

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over exaggerate the [u] of the diphthong, closing the vowel too much or elongating it.

ang [ɑŋ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ang, bang, pang, mang, fang, dang, tang, nang, lang, gang, kang, hang, zang, cang, sang, zhang, chang, shang, rang

Lin's IPA: [ɑŋ]
Mei's IPA: [aŋ]

Mei's choice of [aŋ] is slightly too bright for this ending sound.

The final [ŋ] should be treated as if it were an ending consonant.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken the vowel towards [ɔŋ].

uang, wang [wɑŋ]	Appears after g-, k-, h-, zh- ch-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wang, guang, kuang, huang, zhuang, chuang, shuang

Lin's IPA: [wɑŋ]
Mei's IPA: [uaŋ]

Mei's choice of [uaŋ] is slightly too bright for this ending. Additionally, the "u" vowel of this ending functions as a [w] glide, not as an actual vowel. A singer should not spend any time on the [u] vowel of this ending.

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible. The final [ŋ] should be treated as if it were an ending consonant.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [w] glide, inadvertently adding an [u] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the word "guang" ([gwɑŋ]) in Chinese might become [guɑŋ].

iang, yang [jɑŋ]	Appears after n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yang, niang, liang, jiang, qiang, xiang

Lin's IPA: [jɑŋ]
Mei's IPA: [iaŋ], [jaŋ]

I am unsure as to why Mei gives two IPA options. All of the possible *Pinyin* words above should be pronounced as one syllable. One should move through the [j] glide as quickly as possible. The final [ŋ] should be treated as if it were an ending consonant.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [j] glide, inadvertently adding an [i] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the word "niang" ([njɑŋ]) in Chinese might become [niyɑŋ].

[e] dominant endings

The Chinese [e] is pronounced similarly to the Italian [e]. It is a more open [e] than the German [e]. John Moriarty uses [e²] for this sound, describing it as the "equivalent to closed Italian **e** (relaxed closed **e**) as in **vero**."[53] Native English speakers will tend to not close the Chinese [e] enough, turning it into an [ɛ].

ei [e:ɪ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, n-, l-, g-, h-, z-, zh-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ei, bei, pei, mei, fei, dei, nei, lei, gei, hei, zei, zhei, shei

Lin's IPA: [ei]
Mei's IPA: [ei]

This ending is pronounced similarly to the German [e] but slightly more open with a quick [ɪ] vowel at the end.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over-exaggerate the diphthong, turning [ɪ] into [i].

[53] Moriarty, *Diction Italian, Latin, French, German*, 227. Emphasis added by Moriarty.

wei, ui (uei) [we:ɪ]	Appears after d-, t-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wei, dui, tui, gui, kui, hui, zui, cui, sui, zhui, chui, shui, rui

Lin's IPA: [wei]
Mei's IPA: [uei]

The *Pinyin* for this ending is slightly misleading, as it never appears as "uei" and only appears as "ei" when preceded by "w." This ending most often appears as "-ui," where the "u" functions as a [w] glide and the "i" functions as the diphthong [ei]. Mei's [uei] is misleading, as none of the *Pinyin* words that use this ending will ever sustain the [u] vowel in singing.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [w] glide, inadvertently adding an [u] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the word "gui" ([gweɪ]) in Chinese might become [gueɪ]. They will also tend to over-exaggerate the diphthong, turning [ɪ] into [i].

[ɤ] dominant endings

Yen-Hwei Lin in *The Sounds of Chinese* uses an [ə] in the IPA of most of these endings, but a Chinese conductor at the 2016 American Choral Directors Association regional conference in Boston advocated for [ɤ], which he describes as an "open schwa."[54] The "open schwa" will yield a better result when elongated in singing than an [ə], which can tend to be too dark of a vowel and will not produce upper harmonics and thus will tend to fall under pitch. In English, there are many variations of the [ə] vowel. To recreate the [ɤ], try speaking the English word "open" ([əʊpən]), isolate the syllable "-pen," and open it *slightly* towards [ɛ].

Mei often uses [e] for the following endings. The [e] is a complete misrepresentation of the actual vowel sound.

e **[ɤ:ə]**	Appears after m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r
	Possible *Pinyin* words: e, me, de, te, ne, le, ge, ke, he, ze, ce, se, zhe, che, she, re

Lin's IPA: [ɤ]
Mei's IPA: [ə]

This sound is another one of the most difficult endings for English speakers to make. The [ɤ] is not as neutral as the English [ə] sound and occurs closer to the back of the mouth. The key to recreating this sound is to practice singing the [i] vowel and then lower the tongue in the back. The teeth, lips, and jaw should not move. The lips should not round. It also helps to practice saying this sound with a [g] or [x] preceding the vowel to feel the correct back placement of the vowel.

There is no equivalent vowel sound in English. Lin's IPA symbol [ɤ] is the closest, but native speakers of American English will need to practice the steps described above in order to fully and accurately recreate the sound.

Common tendencies: American English speakers might try to round the lips, not tense the tongue, or not make the sound far enough back in the mouth, creating a sound that is too neutral, as in the [ə].

Exceptions: The article "的" often appears as "de" in *Pinyin*. This word is actually pronounced as [də] with a very short vowel rather than [dɤ:ə].[55] Sometimes, "的" also appears as "di" in *Pinyin*, in which case, the word is pronounced [di].

[54] Unfortunately, the presenter's name was not on the handout that he distributed at the presentation at the conference and I am unable to find any record of what the presentation was called.

[55] This word appears in context in several of the songs in the next section.

üe, yue [ɥɤ]	Appears after n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yue, nue, lue, jue, que, xue

Lin's IPA: [ɥe]
Mei's IPA: [yɛ]

Lin's [e] vowel is not a correct representation for the pronunciation of this ending. Mei's [ɛ] is closer, however, when singing a word with the "-üe" ending, one will almost never spend time on the [u] vowel. The IPA [ɥɤ] best represents both the glide and the sustained vowel of this ending sound.

Because the *Pinyin* ending "-ue" is always pronounced as [ɥɤ] (and never as [uɤ]), the umlaut will never appear over this ending in *Pinyin*.

One should move through the [ɥ] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: English speakers will tend to turn the [ɥ] glide into an [u] or over exaggerate the final [ɛ] sound. For example, the word "xue" ([ɕyɤ]) might become [shuwɛ] or [shuwei].

en [ɤn]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, n-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: en, ben, pen, men, fen, nen, gen, ken, hen, zen, cen, sen, zhen, chen, shen, ren

Lin's IPA: [ən]
Mei's IPA: [en]

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken this ending sound to match the English [ən] as in the word "bun" [bən] or to over-brighten this ending sound as in the name "Ben" [bɛn] (to match the *Pinyin*). It helps to think of the vowel as somewhere in between the [ə] and the [ɛ].

uen (wen) [wɤn]	Appears after d-, t-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wen, dun, tun, lun, gun, kun, hun, zun, cun, sun, zhun, chun, shun, run

Lin's IPA: [wən]
Mei's IPA: [uen]

The ending "-uen" is very misleading, as the ending will never appear in this form. All words that use this ending will either appear as "wen" or "-un" when preceded by another consonant.

Mei's IPA is not at all an accurate representation of this ending. When singing this ending, one will never sustain an [u] vowel and the [e] is simply incorrect.

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken this ending sound to match the English [ən] as in the word "bun" [bən] or to over-brighten this ending sound as in the name "Ben" [bɛn] (to match the *Pinyin*). It helps to think of the vowel as somewhere in between the [ə] and the [ɛ].

eng [ɤŋ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: eng, beng, peng, meng, feng, deng, teng, neng, leng, geng, keng, heng, zeng, ceng, seng, zheng, cheng, sheng, reng

Lin's IPA: [əŋ]
Mei's IPA: [eŋ]

The [ɤ] vowel is pronounced the same as the previous endings. The [ŋ] is pronounced the same as in English.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over darken this ending sound to match the English [ən] as in the word "bun" [bən] (to match the IPA) or to over-brighten this ending sound as in the name "Ben" [bɛn] (to match the *Pinyin*). The vowel should feel more forward in the mouth than the [ə]. It helps to think of the vowel as somewhere in between the [ə] and the [ɛ].

ueng (weng) [wəŋ]	This word only appears in one form: “weng.”
	Possible *Pinyin* words: weng

Lin’s IPA: [wəŋ]
Mei’s IPA: [ueŋ]

Mei’s IPA is not at all an accurate representation of this ending. When singing this ending, one will never sustain an [u] vowel and the [e] is simply incorrect.

One should move through the [w] glide as quickly as possible.

[ɛ] dominant endings

The [ɛ] in Chinese is akin to the Italian [ɛ] vowel but very slightly more closed. It is not quite as closed as Moriarty's [e²].

ie (ye) [jɛ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ye, bie, pie, mie, die, tie, nie, lie, jie, qie, xie

Lin's IPA: [je]
Mei's IPA: None listed.

Lin's choice of [e] vowel is too closed to accurately represent this ending.

One should move through the [j] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [j] glide, inadvertently adding an [i] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. For example, the Chinese word "bie" ([bjɛ]) might become [bijɛ]. Native English speakers also have a tendency to open up the [ɛ] vowel too much (as in "eh"), giving it the wrong color.

ian (yan) [jɛn]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yan, bian, pian, mian, dian, tian, nian, lian, jian, qian, xian

Lin's IPA: [jɛn]
Mei's IPA: [ian]

Mei's IPA [ian] is not an accurate representation because a singer will almost never sustain the [i] sound in this ending and the [a] vowel is incorrect.

One should move as quickly through the [j] glide as possible. Note that although this ending is spelled "-ian" in *Pinyin*, the dominant vowel in singing is actually an [ɛ] instead of an [a] or [ɑ] as in the other endings with a similar spelling ("-ang," "-iang," "-a," etc.).

Common tendencies: Native English speakers tend to not move quickly enough through the [j] glide, inadvertently adding an [i] or turning a one-syllable word into two syllables. Native English speakers also have a tendency to open up the [ɛ] vowel too much. For example, the word "nian" ([njɛn]) in Chinese might become either [nijɛn] or [njan].

[i] dominant endings

The [i] in Chinese is essentially the same as the [i] in English or Italian but with less rounded lips. In the cases of [i] followed by [n] or [ŋ], many native English speakers will try to read the *Pinyin* like English and turn the [i] vowel into an [ɪ]. Insist that the [i] vowel always be closed. Note that I am not including any descriptions or tendencies below because in my experience, English speakers do not struggle with these sounds after being reminded to pronounce this as a closed [i].

i [i]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yi, bi, pi, mi, di, ti, ni, li, ji, qi, xi

Lin's IPA: [i]
Mei's IPA: [i]

in (yin) [in]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yin, bin, pin, min, nin, lin, jin, qin, xin

Lin's IPA: [in]
Mei's IPA: [in]

ing (ying) [iŋ]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, d-, t-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ying, bing, ping, ming, ding, ting, ning, ling, jing, qing, xing

Lin's IPA: [iŋ]
Mei's IPA: [iŋ]

[ɔ] dominant endings

o **[ɔ]** **[wɔ]**	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: o, bo, po, mo, fo

Lin's IPA: [ɔ]
Mei's IPA: [ɔ]

The word *o* in *Pinyin* sounds as an [ɔ], but when a consonant precedes it, there is a very slight [w] glide between but the beginning consonant and the [ɔ] vowel. The end of the vowel is more closed than the [ɔ] in English or Italian.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to close to an [o] instead of ending on the [ɔ]. For example, "bo" ([bwɔ]) might become [buwo].

uo **(wo)** **[wɔ]**	Appears after d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wo, duo, tuo, nuo, luo, guo, kuo, huo, zuo, cuo, suo, zhuo, chuo, shuo

Lin's IPA: [wo]
Mei's IPA: [wo]

Lin and Mei's [o] vowel is too closed to accurately represent this sound.

This ending is pronounced the same as the previous ending when preceded by a consonant.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to close to an [o] instead of ending on the [ɔ]. For example, "shuo" ([ʂwɔ]) might become [ʃuwo].

[o] dominant endings

The Chinese [o] vowel is pronounced similarly to the German [o] vowel but slightly more open. Native English speakers will tend to turn the [o] vowel into the vowel found in the English word "coat" [kʰoʊt]. When said correctly, the lips will be much more rounded when saying the Mandarin [o] than in the English [o].

ou [o:ʊ]	Appears after p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: ou, pou, mou, fou, dou, tou, lou, gou, kou, hou, zou, cou, sou, zhou, chou, shou, rou

Lin's IPA: [ou]
Mei's IPA: [əu]

Mei's choice of [ə] in her IPA does not accurately reflect the vowel of this ending.

The [ʊ] vowel at the end should be placed at the last possible second of a held note.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over exaggerate the [ʊ] of the diphthong, closing the vowel to a [u] or elongating it.

iou (you) [jo:ʊ]	Appears after m-, d-, n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: you, miu, diu, niu, liu, jiu, qiu, xiu

Lin's IPA: [jou]
Mei's IPA: [iu], [ju]

This sound never appears as "-iou" in *Pinyin*. It most often appears as "-iu" or as the word *you*.

Mei's choices of [iu] and [ju] are far too closed to accurately represent this ending. Additionally, a singer will almost never sustain the [i] vowel when singing a word with this ending.

The [ʊ] vowel at the end should be placed at the last possible second of a held note.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers will tend to over exaggerate the [ʊ] of the diphthong, closing the vowel to a [u] or elongating it.

ong [oŋ]	Appears after d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: dong, tong, nong, long, gong, kong, hong, zong, cong, song, zhong, chong, rong

Lin's IPA: [uŋ]
Mei's IPA: [ɔŋ]

Lin's [u] vowel is too closed and Mei's [ɔ] vowel is too open. The [o] vowel splits the difference between those two and is the most accurate representation of this ending.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers when seeing the spelling of these *Pinyin* words will tend to pronounce them with the [ɔ] vowel sound.

iong (yong) [joŋ]	Appears after j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yong, jiong, qiong, xiong

Lin's IPA: [uŋ]
Mei's IPA: [ɔŋ]

Lin's [u] vowel is too closed and Mei's [ɔ] vowel is too open. The [o] vowel splits the difference between those two and is the most accurate representation of this ending.

One should move through the [j] glide as quickly as possible.

Common tendencies: Native English speakers when seeing the spelling of these *Pinyin* words will tend to pronounce them with the [ɔ] vowel sound. If the [j] glide is not quick, one syllable words tend to become two.

[u] dominant endings

This ending is pronounced similarly to the German [u] vowel. Native English speakers will tend to not round the lips enough to produce the Mandarin version of this vowel.

u [u]	Appears after b-, p-, m-, f-, d-, t-, n-, l-, g-, k-, h-, z-, c-, s-, zh-, ch-, sh-, r-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: wu, bu, pu, mu, fu, du, tu, nu, lu, gu, ku, hu, zu, cu, su, zhu, chu, shu, ru

Lin's IPA: [u]
Mei's IPA: [u]

[y] dominant endings

This ending is pronounced similarly to the German [y] (ü) vowel. Native English speakers will tend to not round the lips enough to produce the Mandarin version of this vowel. Additionally, they might tend to turn the [y] vowel into a pure [u] or add a [w] glide and an [i] vowel. For example, the Chinese word "jun" ([tɕyn]) might become [dʒun] or [dʒuwin].

Note that when "y-," "j-," "q-," or "x-" precedes "-u" or "-un," the "u" vowel will always be pronounced as [y]. When any other consonant precedes "-u" or "-un," the "u" vowel is pronounced as a pure [u] or an [ɤn], respectively.

ü (yu) [y]	Appears after n-, l-, j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yu, nü, lü, ju, qu, xu

Lin's IPA: [ɥy]
Mei's IPA: [y]

I chose to use Mei's IPA because the [ɥ] glide is only present in the case of the word "yu." When preceded by [n], [l], [j], [q], or [x], the "ü" or "u" becomes simply [y].

ün (yun) [ɥyn]	Appears after j-, q-, x-
	Possible *Pinyin* words: yun, jun, qun, xun

Lin's IPA: [ɥyn]
Mei's IPA: [yn]

As above, "yun," "qun," "jun," and "xun" are only pronounced with an [yn] ending and never a pure [u], therefore an umlaut is not needed to distinguish the endings.

Pronounced like a German ü ([y]) with a slight [i] before the [n] consonant. At the onset, the lips form an [u] and the tongue is shaped like an [i]. Before the [n], the vowel shifts very slightly to an [i].

A Selection of IPA Examples for Pieces Published in the US

Below are several examples of pieces already published in the US with their texts as published in their respective arrangements (including punctuation). Some of the pieces that I chose are selected randomly from my personal music library and others were selected specifically to address issues with the transliteration. In the following charts, I include the *Pinyin* romanization as well as the IPA based on my suggestions in the diction guide, and a word-for-word translation. Because the Chinese tones are not relevant to how the words are pronounced when singing, I have omitted them from the *Pinyin*. In *Pinyin*, a two-syllable word would be written as a single "word" without a space (e.g., *pingguo* for "apple"), but for clarity, I have written out all texts as if they were monosyllabic (e.g., *ping guo*).

Included with each piece is a poetic translation and a word-for-word translation. When printing a translation in a concert program, it is best to use Chinese characters alongside the English translation. In the texts below, I have used the simplified Chinese characters used in most of mainland China.[56] The majority of resources online for Chinese songs published in English-speaking countries include both a *Pinyin* translation in addition to the Chinese characters, so the characters should not be difficult to find. Audience members who do not speak Chinese do not need to know the pronunciation of the text (the *Pinyin*) and Chinese-speaking audience members will not need the *Pinyin*.

[56] Taiwan and some parts of China use traditional Chinese characters, many of which are the same as the simplified characters. A few characters have more strokes or appear more ornate.

***Moh lee hwah (Jasmine flower)* arr. B. Wayne Bisbee[57]**
Publisher: Santa Barbara Publishing

For his arrangement of the Chinese folk song 茉莉花 (*Molihua*), Bisbee created his own transliteration of Chinese based on English sounds. However, when compared to the actual *Pinyin* and the suggested IPA, the transliteration does not accurately reflect the color of the vowels, the diphthongs, or the correct mouth placement of the "j," "zh," "x," or "r" beginnings. I have included my own version of the the text in *Pinyin* to reflect a standardized romanization of the original Chinese.

Table 4: Transliteration, *Pinyin*, and IPA chart for *Moh lee hwah*.

Transliteration[58]	**Pinyin**	**IPA**
How ee doh may lee dee moh lee hwah,	Hao yi duo mei li de mo li hua,	xɑ:ʊ i dwɔ mei li də mwɔ li xwa
How ee doh may lee dee moh lee hwah.	Hao yi duo mei li de mo li hua.	xɑ:ʊ i dwɔ mei li də mwɔ li xwa
Fehnn fawng may lee mahnn juh yah	Fen fang mei li man zhi ya	fɤn faŋ mei li man dʒɻ ja
Yoh s(ee)ahng yoh bye rehnn rehnn kwah.	You xiang you bai ren ren kua.	jou ɕjaŋ jou ba:ɪ ɻɤn ɻɤn kʰwa
Rahng woh lah(ee) j(ee)ahng nee tzah(ee) s(ee)ah	Rang wo lai jiang ni zhai xia	ɻaŋ wɔ lai tɕjaŋ ni dʒa:ɪ ɕja
Sohng gay b(ee)eh rehnn j(ee)ah.	Song gei bie ren jia.	soŋ gei bjɛ ɻɤn tɕja
Moh lee hwah, moh lee hwah.	Mo li hua, mo li hua.	mɔ li xwa mɔ li xwa

[57] B. Wayne Bisbee, arr., *Moh lee hwah (Jasmine Flower)* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Publishing, Inc., 2008).
[58] Bisbee, *Moh lee hwah*, 3-5.

Translation

Characters:	好	一多	美丽的[59]	茉莉花
Pinyin:	Hao	yiduo	meilide	molihua
IPA:	xɑːʊ	i dwɔ	mei li də	mwɔ li xwa
Word-for-word:	Very	[measure word for flower]	beautiful	jasmine flowers

好	一多	美丽的	茉莉花
hao	yiduo	meilide	molihua
xɑːʊ	i dwɔ	mei li də	mwɔ li xwa
Very	[measure word for flower]	beautiful	jasmine flowers

芬芳	美丽	满	枝桠
fenfang	meili	man	zhiya
fɤn faŋ	mei li	man	dʒɻ ja
fragrant	beautiful	full	branches

又	香	又	白	人人	夸
you	xiang	you	bai	renren	kua
jou	ɕjaŋ	jou	baːɪ	ɻɤn ɻɤn	kʰwa
very	fragrant	very	white	everybody	praises

让	我	来	将	你	摘	下
rang	wo	lai	jiang	ni	zhai	xia
ɻaŋ	wɔ	lai	tɕjaŋ	ni	dʒaːɪ	ɕja
let	me	come	take	you	pluck	down

送给	别	人家
songgei	bie	renjia
soŋ gei	bjɛ	ɻɤn tɕja
give	other	everyone

茉莉花	茉莉花
molihua	molihua
mɔ li xwa	mɔ li xwa
jasmine flower	jasmine flower

[59] *De* in this case is one of the exceptions to the "e" ending. The word *de* here is an auxiliary word used after an attribute, in this case, modifying *meili* or "beautiful."

Poetic Translation by unknown (from Chinese Folk Songs for Music Teachers website)[60]

Beautiful jasmine flower
Beautiful jasmine flower
Sweet-smelling, beautiful, stems full of buds
Fragrant and white, everyone praises
Let me pluck you down to give to someone
Jasmine flower, jasmine flower

[60] "Mō Lì Huā," Chinese Folk Songs for Music Teachers, accessed February 3, 2020, http://www.chinesefolksongs.com/m333-ligrave-hu257-jasmine-flower.html.

Emerald Green Grass (View from a Chinese Hillside) **arr. Rollo Fisher**
Publisher: Walton Music

I am not sure of the origins of the transliteration for this text, but it seems as though the pronunciation was transcribed from a recording and not in consultation with either *Pinyin* or a native Chinese speaker. When pronounced aloud, the transliteration somewhat imitates the Chinese text when sung, but has some egregious consonants and certain sounds are represented incorrectly.

Table 5: Transliteration, *Pinyin*, and IPA chart for *Emerald Green Grass*.

Transliteration[61]	**Pinyin**	**IPA**
Swayn lui di chao di shang Lay pao troh pay yang Yang chueen sahn sehn chu sa tzahee lui rong shang.	Cui lü de cao di shang Ai bao zhe bai yang Yang qun xiang zhen zhu sa zai lü rong shang.	tsʰweːɪ ly də tsʰɑːʊ di ʂaŋ aːɪ bɑːʊ dʒɤːə baːɪ jaŋ jaŋ tɕʰɥin ɕjaŋ dʒɤn dʒu sa dzai ly ɻoŋ ʂaŋ
Wu biehn der chao yehn shuh woh mehn gu sheeung Bahee yuin ching kiehm shuh woh muhn di pohng chahng.	Wu bian de cao yuan shi wo men gu xiang Bai yun he qing tian shi wo men de feng zheng.	wu bjɛn də tsʰɑːʊ ɥan ʂɻ wɔ mɤn gu ɕjaŋ baːɪ ɥn xɤːə tɕʰiŋ tʰjɛn ʂɻ wɔ mɤn də fɤŋ dʒɤŋ
Tzahoh shiah ying djeh woh luh yoh di guh chahng Shuhng kwoh shuhn tuh yahng seeng fu wahn chang.	Zao xia ying jie wo zi you de ge chang Sheng huo shi zhe yang xing fu huan chang.	dzɑːʊ ɕja iŋ tɕjɛ wɔ dzɻ jou də gɤːə tʂʰaŋ ʂɤŋ xwɔ ʂɻ dʒɤːə jaŋ ɕiŋ fu xwan tʂʰaŋ

[61] Rollo Fisher, arr., *Emerald Green Grass (Mu Ge)*, trans. by Jennifer MacKenzie (Chicago: Walton Music, 2009), 3-8.

Translation

翠绿	的	草	地上
cuilü	de	cao	dishang
tsʰweːɪ ly	də	tsʰɑːʊ	di ʂaŋ
emerald green	[auxiliary]	grass	ground

唉	抱着	白羊
ai	baozhe	baiyang
aːɪ	bɑːʊ dʒɤːə	bai jaŋ
ah	surrounds	white sheep

羊群	像	珍珠
yangqun	xiang	zhenzhu
jaŋ tɕʰɥin	ɕjaŋ	dʒɤn dʒu
flock of sheep	like	pearls

撒	在	绿绒	上
sa	zai	lürong	shang.
sa	dzai	ly ɻoŋ	ʂaŋ
scattered	on	lush green	surface

无边	的	草原
wubian	de	caoyuan
wu bjɛn	də	tsʰɑːʊ ɥan
boundless	[auxiliary]	prairie

是	我们	故乡
shi	women	guxiang
ʂɻ	wɔ mɤn	gu ɕjaŋ
is	our	hometown

白云	和	青天
baiyun	he	qingtian
baːɪ ɥn	xɤːə	tɕʰiŋ tʰjɛn
white clouds	and	clear skies

是	我们	的	风筝
shi	women	de	fengzheng
ʂɻ	wɔ mɤn	də	fɤŋ dʒɤŋ
is	our	(possessive particle)	kite

早	霞	迎接	我
zao	xia	yingjie	wo
dzɑːʊ	ɕja	iŋ tɕjɛ	wɔ
early	rosy clouds	welcome	me

自由	地	歌唱
ziyou	de	gechang
dzɻ jou	də	gɤːə tʂʰaŋ
freely	[adverb auxiliary]	singing

生活	是	这样
shenghuo	shi	zheyang
ʂɤŋ xwɔ	ʂɻ	dʒɤːə jaŋ
life	is	so

幸福	欢畅
xingfu	huanchang.
ɕiŋ fu	xwan tʂʰaŋ
happy	jubilant

Poetic Translation by Jennifer MacKenzie[62]

Oh, the emerald green grass! It surrounds white sheep. The flock is like pearls scattered on green velvet.
This unending prairie is my hometown; white clouds in the blue sky, our kite.
The rosy sunrise welcomes me, singing freely. Life is so happy and full of joy.

[62] Fisher, *Emerald Green Grass,* 8.

***Meditation: Two Songs for Voice and Piano* by Chen Yi**
Publisher: Theodore Presser Company

Chen Yi uses the *Pinyin* of the poetry for this set of two art songs, 花落知多少 (Hua luo zhi duo shao) and "Monologue." In the inside cover, she gives a quick pronunciation guide with IPA comparisons while stating that they are "approximations." Below are the two poems along with my suggested IPA.

1. Know You How Many Petals Falling?

Table 6: *Pinyin* and IPA chart for "Know You How Many Petals Falling?"

Pinyin	**IPA**
Chun mian bu jue xiao, Chu chu wen ti niao. Ye lai feng yu sheng, Hua luo zhi duo shao.	tʂʰwɤn mjɛn bu tɕɥɤ ɕjɑːʊ tʂʰu tʂʰu wɤn tʰi njɑːʊ jɛ laːɪ fɤŋ y ʂɤŋ xwa lwɔ dʒɻ dwɔ ʂɑːʊ

Translation

春	眠	不觉	晓
chun	mian	bujue	xiao
tʂʰwɤn	mjɛn	bu tɕɥɤ	ɕjɑːʊ
spring	sleeps	unconsciously	dawn

处处	问	啼	鸟
chuchu	wen	ti	niao
tʂʰu tʂʰu	wɤn	tʰi	njɑːʊ
everywhere	asks	cries	bird

夜	来	风雨	声
ye	lai	feng yu	sheng
jɛ	laːɪ	fɤŋ y	ʂɤŋ
night	comes	wind and rain	sounds

花	落	知	多少
hua	luo	zhi	duo shao
xwa	lwɔ	dʒɻ	dwɔ ʂɑːʊ
flowers	fall	knows	how many

2. Monologue

Table 7: *Pinyin* and IPA chart for "Monologue."

Pinyin	**IPA**
Qian bu jian gu ren, Hou bu jian lai zhe. Nian tian di zhi you you, Du chuang ran er ti xia.	tɕʰjɛn bu tɕjɛn gu ɻɤn xoːʊ bu tɕjɛn laːɪ dʒɤːə njɛn tʰjɛn di dʒɻ jou jou du tʂʰwaŋ ɻan ar tʰi ɕja

Translation

钱	不见	古人
qian	bujian	gu ren
tɕʰjɛn	bu tɕjɛn	gu ɻɤn
money	cannot see	the ancients

后	不见	来这
hou	bujian	lai zhe
xoːʊ	bu tɕjɛn	laːɪ dʒɤːə
behind	cannot see	[auxiliary that indicates a past action]

念	天地	之	悠悠
nian	tiandi	zhi	you you
njɛn	tʰjɛn di	dʒɻ	jou jou
thought	heaven and earth	go	forever

独	怆然	而	涕	下
du	chuangran	er	ti	xia
du	tʂʰwaŋ ɻan	ar	tʰi	ɕja
alone	sad	and	tears	fall

Poetic Translation by Chen Yi[63]

1. Know You How Many Petals Falling?

Spring dreams unconscious of dawning,
Not woke up till I hear birds singing;
O night long wind and showers -
Know you how many petals falling?

2. Monologue

Where are the sages of the past
And those of future years?
Sky and earth forever last,
Lonely, I felt sad with running tears.

[63] Chen Yi, *Meditation*, 2.

***Boat on Tai Lake* arr. Reed Criddle[64]**
Publisher: Santa Barbara, 2013

Like Chen's work described above, Criddle's arrangement of *Boat on Tai Lake* also uses *Pinyin*. In his pronunciation description, he describes the vowels as, "pure as in Italian and the consonants sound as in English" as well as listing a few exceptions using an English-based transliteration. These rules are a good starting point, particularly for *bel canto* style singing, but they will still yield an American-ized result. Below is the *Pinyin* of the text along with my suggested IPA.

Table 8: *Pinyin* and IPA chart for *Boat on Tai Lake*.

Pinyin	**IPA**
Shan qing shui ming you jing jing Hu shang piao lai feng yi zhen A xing a xing a jin ya jin	ʂan tɕʰiŋ ʂweːɪ miŋ jou tɕiŋ tɕiŋ xu ɕjaŋ pʰjɑːʊ laːɪ fɤŋ i dʒɤn a ɕiŋ a ɕiŋ a tɕin ja tɕin
Huang hun shi hou ren xing shao Ban kong yue ying shui mian yao A xing a xing a jin ya jin	xwaŋ xwɤn ʂɻ xoːʊ ɻɤn ɕiŋ ʂɑːʊ ban kʰoŋ ɥɤ iŋ ʂweːɪ mjɛn jɑːʊ a ɕiŋ a ɕiŋ a tɕin ja tɕin
Shui cao mang mang tai hu an Piao lai zhen zhen lu hua xiang A xing a xing a jin ya jin	ʂweːɪ tsʰɑːʊ maŋ maŋ tʰaːɪ xu an pʰjɑːʊ laːɪ dʒɤn dʒɤn lu xwa ɕjaŋ a ɕiŋ a ɕiŋ a tɕin ja tɕin
Shui se shan guang ying xie yang Hu mian dian dian shi fan ying A xing a xing a jin ya jin	ʂweːɪ sɤːə ʂan gwaŋ iŋ ɕjɛ jaŋ xu mjɛn djɛn djɛn ʂɻ fan iŋ a ɕiŋ a ɕiŋ a tɕin ja tɕin

[64] Criddle, Reed, arr., *Boat on Tai Lake* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc., 2013).

Translation

山	青	水	明	悠	静静
shan	qing	shui	ming	you	jingjing
ʂan	tɕʰiŋ	ʂweːɪ	miŋ	jou	tɕiŋ tɕiŋ
mountain	green	water	bright	leisurely	quiet

湖上	票	来	风	一阵
hushang	piao	lai	feng	yizhen
xu ɕjaŋ	pʰjɑːʊ	laːɪ	fɤŋ	i dʒɤn
on the lake	floats	across	wind	a burst

啊	行	啊	行
a	xing	a	xing
a	ɕiŋ	a	ɕiŋ
ah	go	ah	go

啊	近	呀	近
a	jin	ya	jin
a	tɕin	ja	tɕin
ah	forward	ah	forward

黄昏	时候	人	行	少
huanghun	shihou	ren	xing	shao
xwaŋ xwɤn	ʂɻ xoːʊ	ɻɤn	ɕiŋ	ʂɑːʊ
dusk	time	people	travel	less

半空	月	影	水面	摇
bankong	yue	ying	shuimian	yao
ban kʰoŋ	ɥɤ	iŋ	ʂweːɪ mjɛn	jɑːʊ
midair	moon	shadow	surface of the water	shakes

啊	行	啊	行
a	xing	a	xing
a	ɕiŋ	a	ɕiŋ
ah	go	ah	go

啊	近	呀	近
a	jin	ya	jin
a	tɕin	ja	tɕin
ah	forward	ah	forward

水草	茫茫	太	湖	岸
shuicao	mangmang	tai	hu	an
ʂweːɪ tsʰɑːʊ	maŋ maŋ	tʰaːɪ	xu	an
water plants	boundless	Tai	lake	bank

飘来	阵阵	芦花	香
piaolai	zhenzhen	luhua	xiang
pʰjɑːʊ laːɪ	dʒɤn dʒɤn	lu xwa	ɕjaŋ
blow	gust	reeds	fragrant

啊	行	啊	行
a	xing	a	xing
a	ɕiŋ	a	ɕiŋ
ah	go	ah	go

啊	近	呀	近
a	jin	ya	jin
a	tɕin	ja	tɕin
ah	forward	ah	forward

水色	山光	映	斜阳
shuise	shanguang	ying	xieyang
ʂweːɪ sɤːə	ʂan gwaŋ	iŋ	ɕjɛ jaŋ
color of the water	mountain brightness	reflect	setting sun

湖面	点点	是	帆	影
humian	diandian	shi	fan	ying
xu mjɛn	djɛn djɛn	ʂɻ	fan	iŋ
lake surface	slightly	is	sail	reflection

啊	行	啊	行
a	xing	a	xing
a	ɕiŋ	a	ɕiŋ
ah	go	ah	go

啊	近	呀	近
a	jin	ya	jin
a	tɕin	ja	tɕin
ah	forward	ah	forward

Poetic Translation by Reed Criddle

The green mountains and gleaming water are restfully still
A gust of wind blows on the surface of the lake
Row, oh row, forward, oh forward.

At dusk, there are few people out;
The reflection of the moon on the surface of the water undulates.
Row, oh row, forward, oh forward.

Water plants abound on the bank of Tai Lake;
Breezes waft the fragrance of reeds and flowers.
Row, oh row, forward, oh forward.

The setting sun is reflected in the water's image and the mountains' glow.
The surface of the lake slightly shows the sail's reflection.
Row, oh row, forward, oh forward.

***Gao Shan Qing* arr. Reed Criddle**
Publisher: Santa Barbara

Criddle's *Gao Shan Qing* is a TTBB arrangement of a Taiwanese aboriginal folk tune. He includes *Pinyin* for the Mandarin Chinese in his introduction to the piece and notes that he has changed some of the *Pinyin* in the actual score to reflect when the *Pinyin* sounds different than it appears.

Below is the *Pinyin* included in the introduction of the score, the IPA for the *Pinyin*, and Criddle's transliteration in the choral parts.

Table 9: *Pinyin,* transliteration, and IPA chart for *Gao Shan Qing*.

Transliteration[65]	**Pinyin**	**IPA**
Gao shan ching, jien shwei lan. Ali Shan di guniang mei ru shwei ya, Ali Shan di shaonien djwang ru shan. Ah! Gao shan chang ching, jien shwei chang lan. Guniang huh na shaonien yong bu fuhnya, Bishwei chang weidjuh ching shan djwan!	Gao shan qing, jian shui lan. A li shan di gu niang mei ru shui ya, A li shan di shao nian zhuang ru shan (n)a. Ah! Gao shan chang qing, jian shui chang lan. Gu niang he na shao nian yong bu fen ya, Bi shui chang wei zhe qing shan zhuan.	gɑːʊ ʂan tɕʰiŋ tɕjɛn ʂweːɪ lan a li ʂan di gu njaŋ meːɪ ɻu ʂweːɪ ja a li san di ʂɑːʊ njɛn dʒwaŋ ɻu ʂan a a gɑːʊ ʂan tʂʰaŋ tɕʰiŋ tɕjɛn ʂweːɪ tʂʰaŋ lan gu njaŋ xɤːə na ʂɑːʊ njɛn joŋ bu fɤn ja bi ʂweːɪ tʂʰaŋ wei dʒɤːə tɕʰiŋ ʂan dʒwan

Translation

高山	青	澗水	蓝
gao shan	qing	jianshui	lan
gɑːʊ ʂan	tɕʰiŋ	tɕjɛn ʂweːɪ	lan
mountain	green	stream	blue

阿里山	的	姑娘	美	如	水
A li shan	di	guniang	mei	ru	shui
a li ʂan	di	gu njaŋ	meːɪ	ɻu	ʂweːɪ
Ali Mountain	[possessive particle]	girls	beautiful	as	water

[65] Reed Criddle, arr., *Gao Shan Qing* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc., 2014), 3-5.

呀
ya
ja
[article used to indicate emphasis]

阿里山	的	少年	壮	如	山
A li shan	di	shaonian	zhuang	ru	shan
a li san	di	ʂɑːʊ njɛn	dʒwaŋ	ɻu	ʂan
Ali Mountain	[possessive particle]	young men	strong	as	mountain

啊	啊
a	a
a	a
Ah! [article used to indicate emphasis]	

高山	长	青	涧水	长	蓝
gaoshan	chang	qing	jianshui	chang	lan
gɑːʊ ʂan	tʂʰaŋ	tɕʰiŋ	tɕjɛn ʂweːɪ	tʂʰaŋ	lan
mountain	always	green	stream	always	blue

姑娘	和	那	少年	永	不分
guniang	he	na	shaonian	yong	bufen
gu njaŋ	xɤːə	na	ʂɑːʊ njɛn	joŋ	bu fɤn
the girl	and	that	young man	forever	not divided

呀
ya
ja
[article used to indicate emphasis]

碧	水	长	围着	青	山	转
bi	shui	chang	wei zhe	qing	shan	zhuan
bi	ʂweːɪ	tʂʰaŋ	wei dʒɤːə	tɕʰiŋ	ʂan	dʒwan
jade	water	always	encircling	green	mountain	shifting

Poetic Translation by Reed Criddle[66]

The mountain is green; the stream is blue.
The maidens of Ali Mountain are as beautiful as the water;
The young men of Ali Mountain are as strong as the mountain.
The mountain is always green; the stream is always blue.
The maiden and that youth will never be separated -
Like the Bi River always encircling the green mountain.

[66] Criddle, *Gao Shan Qing*, 2.

Conclusion

Accessing and performing Chinese choral music in the US is exceedingly difficult. This phenomenon is not because the works are more complex than choral music being written elsewhere, nor is it because there is less choral activity in China. It is simply a matter of accessibility. New Chinese choral works from China are challenging to discover and to distribute due to language barriers and differences in copyright laws. Works published in the Chinese language in the United States are difficult to perform because there is no standard for publishing the romanization of Chinese. Despite these numerous barriers, there are reasonable solutions to these issues.

First, American conductors need to make more contact with composers in China and/or Chinese conductors in the United States in order to acquire new, contemporary Chinese choral works. Second, there needs to be established guidelines for how these pieces can be distributed to choirs in the United States. For example, if pieces are available for purchase as a single PDF, as Yen noted with the MIT-Cambridge Chinese Choral Society, conductors could purchase PDFs for every member of the choir. If pieces are available in a published anthology, such as *Half Moon Rising*, it would be helpful if conductors could copy the pieces they need from the anthology for their choir, as is the practice in China, but is not approved of by US copyright laws. Third, publishing companies in Europe and North America need to make *Pinyin* the standard system of romanization across all choral works in Mandarin Chinese. Conductors and singers should be taught how to pronounce *Pinyin* as they would any romanized language. Solving these issues would take the commitment of choral conductors throughout the English-speaking world to tackle the daunting task of moving out of their comfort zones of English, German, Italian, and French-language works. What would be gained is a whole new body of non-Western repertoire from authentic sources.

Finally, conductors need to have a complete and accessible pronunciation guide that they can easily find and use to help lead their choirs in the performance of Chinese-language works. For this purpose, I have created a singer/conductor-focused diction guide that teaches Mandarin Chinese with its own set of pronunciation rules distinct from guides that only describe how the sounds compare to English.

This new resource will allow Chinese music to be sung more broadly, matching the increased presence of Chinese choirs and the demand for Chinese music. When this guide is published and distributed more widely, I trust that it will be a suitable first step in making the performance of Chinese choral music more accessible for conductors and singers around the world.

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